

A

T R E A T I S E  
*Of* UPON *Of*  
The Walk of FAITH.

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Friars, and Lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West.

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*Walk humbly with T H Y G O D.*  
Micah vi. 8.

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V O L. I.

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## P R E F A C E.

EVER since the *Life of Faith* was published, I have been attending to the doctrines therein advanced, and bringing them into experience. Their truth has appeared to me from the word of God, and has been confirmed by their being accompanied with the power of God. His divine influence attends his own doctrines to this day, and they have the promised effect upon the heart and life of the believer. They are mighty through God for all the purposes of salvation. What is said upon the subject in these volumes is chiefly in this experimental way. My design is to bring the great and leading points of our religion into use and practice, and to shew how necessary the doctrines of grace are for the well governing of the Christian walk. Every thing needful is promised, and by faith is received, which can make it even and regular, holy and happy.

The apostle Paul complained of professors, who walked not according to the gospel. There has been occasion for the same complaint ever since; but never more than at present. Many walk at this day, who make some profession of Christ, and yet never attain to any stedfastness; but are tossed to and fro, and carried about within

every wind of doctrine, and at last come to nothing.

Others pretending to be better settled, attain to some form of godliness, but are without the life and power of it; they appear to have some notions and opinions about the way of righteousness, but not being taught them of God, nor ever brought under the mighty influence of them, their walk is therefore very uneven and irregular, and generally in the end brings great scandal upon the name and cause of Christ.

We have also many at this day, who set out in the ways of religion, but never felt the ruin of the fall, nor the plague of their own hearts: these are commonly very confident and presumptuous; they make a shining profession, and go on with great parade, until they come to be tried, and then in the time of temptation they fall away.

There are others, who are the real children of God, and yet do not walk as becometh their high rank and dignity. An even, holy, happy walk with their reconciled God and Father is their privilege, and there is grace sufficient promised in Jesus, and to be received by his Spirit, to enable them to live up to it, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Yea, the apostles call upon them and encourage them to be going on and advancing in the right way—"Furthermore then we beseech

" you

“ you and exhort you, brethren, by the  
“ Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have re-  
“ ceived of us, how ye ought to walk and  
“ to please God, so ye would abound more  
“ and more.” *I Thess. iv. 1.* How few  
follow this evangelical exhortation? How  
very few attain and preserve in their consci-  
ences the sense of God’s being perfectly at  
peace with them? It ought to rule there  
always and by all means: but for want of  
it, they afford continual occasion for a legal  
and unbelieving spirit to rob them of their  
peace, and thereby to distress them in their  
hearts. As guilt comes in, love goes out.  
What weakens the cause must also weaken  
the effect. Love with its fruits must decrease  
in proportion as the believer withdraws his  
heart-dependence from God. Then he be-  
gins to walk uneven and uncomfortable, he  
grows cold and indifferent about spiritual  
things, he gets into darkness and discontent,  
he becomes quite unhappy in his frame,  
and unthankful in his affections: whatever  
was the cause of his falling into this decay,  
it began at the root. His faith was attack-  
ed, and gave way. As this yielded, the de-  
cay became general, and it was found true,  
“ If ye will walk contrary unto me, saith  
“ God, then will I also walk contrary unto  
“ you.”

Reader, if thou hast the faith of God’s  
elect, thou knowest that these things are  
true.

true. Thou findest it hard work to maintain peace with God : and if this be not maintained, if the foundation give way, the building will certainly totter. Look well then to the ground work. Is all safe there? Dost thou see the infinite glory of the Saviour's work, when he made peace by the blood of the cross, and does this silence grieve in thy conscience? Canst thou at all times draw nigh in love to a reconciled God? Does not the sense of thy failings and remaining corruptions keep thee at a distance from him, and render thy walk uncomfortable? especially when without are fightings, within are fears. If it be very difficult under such trials to preserve a sense of God's loving kindness, yet it should be remembered, there is a gracious provision made for the establishing of the soul so safely in Jesus Christ, that the peace of God may rule in it always, and by all means. Is it not necessary then to enquire, what this provision is; How it may be received; and how it may be made use of? For if by daily practice it may be experienced in its divine power, it will then have the same happy effect, which it had upon David, "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou hast set my heart at liberty." May thine heart, reader, and mine, enjoy more of the liberty of the children of God, and then we shall not only go forward, but also run fast, and may nothing

nothing stop us from pressing toward the mark, till we win the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

This has been my constant prayer during the writing of the following treatise. It was the fruit of reading, and meditating, and praying over those scriptures, which speak of the walk of Faith. Such reflections, as used to occur to myself, I have put down; whether it was in searching mine own heart, or in begging the blessing of God upon the text then under consideration. This seemed to me an easy method and very useful: because the doctrine would lead to practice, and frequent, and heart-searching meditations would tend under the teaching of the Holy Ghost to an increase of faith. There are some soliloquies, addressed to my own soul, and some exercises of devotion, in prayer and thanksgiving. I would have every believer to consider, whether it be not his privilege to join me in them, and to make my words his own. If he cannot follow me in his experience after the 5th chapter; I pray God to increase his faith, that this book and his experience may go hand in hand; and that he may attain to holy fellowship with God in all duties, and to rejoice in God at all times, yea under the cross itself, and to go on conquering and to conquer, till the good fight of faith be over, and he finish his course with joy.

CON.

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# T R E A T I S E, &c.

## C H A P. I.

*Whoever walks with God, must be first acquainted with the way of peace.*

**I**T is the constant usage of scripture to represent spiritual things by material, and to speak of the faculties and actions of the soul by terms borrowed from those of the body. Walking is a bodily action, and consists in moving and going from one place to another: hence it is applied to the spiritual walk. The soul reconciled to God and at peace with him

B

has

has an appointed way, in which it is to walk, in order to enjoy the grace promised to them who are in Christ Jesus. This is enjoyed by faith; and therefore the scripture calls the believer's going on in his walk with God from strength to strength, *The walk of faith*, "We walk by faith, says "the apostle, not by sight."

When man fell from God he lost his way, and had neither will nor power to return. The old testament church makes this confession—"All we, like sheep, have "gone astray, we have turned **EVERY ONE** "to his own way." *Isa. liii. 6.*

The apostle Peter reminds believers of this—"Ye were as sheep going astray, but "are now returned to the shepherd and "bishop of your souls." *1 Pet. ii. 25.* To which agree the words of his brother Paul—"There is none righteous, no not one, "there is none that understandeth, there is "none that seeketh after God, they are **ALL** "gone out of the way." *Rom. iii. 10, 11, 12.* The whole human race, say the oracles of truth, is gone astray, **ALL** of them are gone out of the way; they have left the way of God, and turned every one to his own way, they are unable, like a poor lost sheep, the most unable of all creatures, to return; yea they are unwilling also; for they walk not after the spirit, but after the flesh—carnally minded, and in their carnal mind

mind enmity itself against God and his ways.

It pleased God in the exceeding riches of his grace to reveal to those wanderers the way of salvation. He made it known to them upon the fall, and believers from that time forward saw it plainly, and went on in it comfortably. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. are said to have walked with God, in the very same way, afterwards marked out by the written word; which was a directory to the Jews, shewing them how they should walk in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham. Age after age, God raised up the prophets to bring his people into the king's high-way, and to put them upon praying, that they might be kept in it. By the mouth of his servant David, he gave them this promise.—“Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way—the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.” Encouraged by this warrant from the word of God, sinners feeling their wants were led to pray, “Shew me thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths, lead me in thy truth and teach me.” *Ps. xxv.*

4. It is written in the prophets—they shall be all taught of God—they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord. If any of his children lack wisdom, and ask it of God,

he giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not. He brings them by his word and by his spirit to the knowledge of themselves, and to the knowledge of the true God.

Divine teaching is necessary to make men acquainted with themselves. They know not their state, nor fear their danger, until the holy Spirit according to his office proceed from the Father and the Son: then he convinces them of sin, of the exceeding sinfulness of it, of the guilt thereby incurred, and of the wrath deserved. He enlightens the understanding with a clear sight of those truths, and he fastens the conviction of them upon the conscience. Then they find, that they had been blind and ignorant, rebels in their wills, and apostates in their hearts from God. He makes them feel the corruption of their nature, and the error of their ways, in which, if they had gone on, they must inevitably have perished: for they were without will, and without power to return to God. When they saw it right they should return, yet it was not their choice to come to him in the way of believing. They found they could not believe, unless it was given them from above. Faith is the gift of God. And cannot be received, but by the mighty operation of God. He must put forth his divine power, or else the convinced

vinced sinner will remain utterly helpless and hopeless, shut up in unbelief.

Thus the Lord teaches all his children. He makes them acquainted with their fallen state, and sensible of their guilt and of their misery. He brings them to their right knowledge of the corruption of every faculty of soul and body, which are always inclined to evil, and incapable of doing any thing truly good. A corrupt tree can bring forth nothing but evil fruit. The judgment is enlightened to see this, the conscience is awakened to feel this, and thereby the convinced sinner is made willing to be taught the way of salvation. The holy Spirit fulfils his office by teaching him the knowledge of God.

Our blessed Saviour declares, no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him ; and this he does by the holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who is therefore given to the children of God, that they may know him and believe in him, as their reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. This saving knowledge is hid from the worldly wise and prudent, but is revealed unto babes, whom the holy Spirit has made simple and teachable people. To them he reveals the things of God. He makes them acquainted with the

*Nature of the Godhead, which is one. There is one Jehovah, and there is none other. And also with the*

*Personality in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit. These three exist in the one Jehovah. They took those names, not to describe their manner of existing, but their manner of acting; not what they are in themselves, but how they stand related to us in the œconomy of redemption: for the eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and agreed to sustain certain covenant offices, and assume names, descriptive of their offices. Father is the title of that divine person, who gave an innumerable company of sinners to his Son, upon condition, that he would be manifested in the flesh, and would become their surety, to work out for them a righteousness in his life, and to make an atonement for them by his death, and then he would be his father, and their father. A co-equal and co-eternal person accepted the condition, and covenanted to be made man, and to live and die for the many sons, whom he was to bring to glory; therefore he took the name of Son, Son of God, son of man, &c. Another co-equal and co-eternal person covenanted to breathe life into them, to be to them the Spirit or breath of life, that they might be regenerate from a death in trespasses and sins, and be made the children*

children of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, therefore he is called throughout the scriptures, *the Spirit*. He makes them acquainted with the covenant, as he has promised, “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.” *Psa. xxv, 14.* He will open to them the nature and certainty of all covenant engagements for the establishment and growth of their faith. *The covenant was ordered in all things and sure:* it was ORDERED by the counsel and purpose of the eternal Three concerning the heirs of promise, whose salvation was settled by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, his counsel, his oath. His counsel, the result of his infinite wisdom, confirmed by that sacred oath which cannot be broken. All his perfections stand engaged to see the sovereign decree, thus solemnly ratified, carried into execution; for what was ordered is SURE—sure as the throne of Jehovah, unchangeable as his nature, durable as his being. Though it be but a man’s covenant, yet when it has been signed and sealed according to law, none disannulleth or addeth thereto. None can disannul God’s covenant, and he himself will not.—“My covenant will I not break, says he, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.” *Ps. lxxxix. 34.* I will not add thereto, nor diminish from it:

for I have ordered it in ALL things. I have not left one single thing out, not the least circumstance: I have settled the whole plan by mine unerring wisdom, and I will fulfil every tittle of it by mine almighty power. According to my will the course of nature and grace is infallibly directed, even the most minute events. Every hair is numbered. Not a sparrow falls but by my divine decree.

How safely then may the heirs of promise depend upon a covenant God? And whenever they fly to Jesus for refuge, what strong consolation may they draw from hence, that their salvation is fixed by the immutable counsel, and inviolable oath of the blessed Trinity?

The same divine teacher, who enabled them to believe those truths for the farther establishment of their faith, led them to discover the FREEDOM of all covenant mercies. They are promised as free gifts. They are bestowed to the praise of the glory of free grace. They are not conferred upon the worthy, but upon enemies, upon the ungodly, upon sinners as sinners. No conditions are required, no pre-requisites are expected. The motives, which determine God to shew mercy to sinners, are not taken from any good in them, or foreseen to be in them. Not for works of righteousness which they have done, or can do; but according to his mercy he saveth them. He does all to the magnifying

magnifying of the honours of his own mercy. His covenant was so contrived, carried into execution in the life and death of Jesus, applied by the holy Spirit, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. No flesh shall glory in his presence. Boasting is for ever excluded ; because all is of grace. Wisdom to teach the sinner saving knowledge, righteousness to justify him, strength to keep him, comforts to bless him, heaven to receive him, these are the free gifts of covenant love : for by grace is he saved through faith, and that not of himself, it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast. Thus would the Lord hide pride from man, and would teach him practically, such scriptures, as this—“ Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord, be it known unto you, but for mine holy Names sake.” *Ezek. xxxvi.*

Closely connected with this divine lesson is the **FULNESS** of covenant mercies. Every thing needful for the salvation of the sinner is fully, as well as freely provided by the exceeding riches of grace, and is treasured up by the Father’s love in the fulness of the Son. To this the Spirit bears witness in the word of truth, and seals his witness upon the believer’s heart. It pleased the Father that in the word made flesh should **ALL** fulness dwell, and that out of his fulness his people should receive grace for grace. This is the

infinite ocean. There is not a stream, not a drop of grace to be had, but from hence. Jesus Christ, as God-man, has it all in himself, and for the same end, as the head has the senses in itself. He has it to communicate to his members, a fulness of light and life, of sense and understanding, of love and joy, yea of every spiritual blessing. On him as the head of the body, the church, every believing member, is directed to live. On him must he depend at all times; and to him must he go for all things. If he seek pardon and peace, righteousness and holiness, a supply of his wants, strength for his warfare, comforts under his miseries, if he expect life in death, and life eternal, he must make continual use of the fulness of Jesus: for in him dwelleth ALL the fulness of the God-head bodily. It dwelleth in him, as in an overflowing fountain. The Father's love to his adopted children, the experience of it by the grace of the Spirit, are entirely in and from the salvation of Jesus Christ. Out of his fulness comes every covenant mercy of the Godhead, and in a rich abundant stream, always flowing with some blessing or other into the believer's soul. The enjoyment of it on his part may not be always alike comfortable, but it is always alike sure on God's part. Nothing can stop it. Nothing can turn its course. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. The river

river of the water of life proceeds out of the throne of God and of the lamb, and it will be running on till it come back into its own ocean. The water that I will give him, says Jesus, speaking of the believer, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life, and bringing with it the fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

No man will see any reason to set out in the way to heaven, until he be made acquainted with those truths. His judgment must be enlightened with the knowledge of them. He will never think of changing his course, until he be made sensible of his own sinful and helpless state: and when this is brought home to his conscience, and he has nothing in himself left to trust in, then he will be led to look abroad for help. The Spirit of God will teach him the doctrines of grace, the nature of the Godhead, the persons in the Godhead, the covenant of the divine persons, by which every grace and blessing was freely and fully provided, given by the Father to the Son, in whose fulness they were all laid up for the use of his body, the church, and communicated to every member of it through the influence of the holy Spirit. Thus he is taught, that all is of grace from first to last. Whatever good a sinner receives on earth, or enjoys in heaven, is so given, as to exclude all boasting, and to lay every proud and self-righteous principle in the dust, that grace alone

alone may wear the crown, and may have all the glory,

Here then, O my soul, is matter of close examination. Dost thou know thyself, thy state and condition, and hast thou fled from the wrath to come? Has the light of God's word shone into thy understanding, and made thee to see that thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven? How was this discovered to thee? Did the holy Spirit ever convince thee of sin, and that thou hadst lost the image and forfeited the favour of God? Didst thou ever see thyself fallen in Adam, in him a child of wrath, a ruined miserable sinner? Hast thou felt how utterly unable thou art to atone for thy sins, or to make thyself holy? And wast thou brought to this after many legal trials and self-righteous efforts? At last forced to give up all hope in thyself, and to look to the Lord who made heaven and earth, from whom alone thy help could come?

And hast thou been taught the true knowledge of the unity of the Godhead, and of the persons in it, Father, Son, and Spirit, the covenant of the ever-blessed three, and the absolute security of all covenant mercies, promised by the Father, and engaged to be given to the Son as the head of his body, the church, who is now actually as God-man in possession of them, and by his Spirit he freely and fully bestows them upon his members:

bers : for they will never cease to be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace, until they receive out of the same fulness glory for glory.

O my soul, examine closely and prove thyself by the standard of the divine word. Search and try, what the conviction of thy lost estate has been. Was it deep and practical ? Is it an abiding truth with thee, that there is no help, or hope in thyself ? And hast thou fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before thee in the Lord Jesus ? Is thy knowledge of the Godhead mere theory, or is it brought into practice ? Dost thou enjoy the Father's love through faith in the finished salvation of the Son, by the influence of the holy Spirit ? This is the saving knowledge of the Godhead. And is this thine ? Dost thou honour the divine persons by acknowledging their immutable counsel, and immutable oath, entered into for the security of the heirs of promise, that they might trust, and not be afraid ? Dost thou see with any clearness the absolute safety of relying upon the promises of God, and dost thou expect to draw from hence comfort to thy conscience, and joy to thy heart ?

If thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven, art thou settled in the knowledge of thy fallen state ? Hast thou found thyself unable to do any thing, but to hasten on thy ruin ? And from the sight and sense of this, hast

hast thou been led to see all undertaken for thee, and secured to thee for time and eternity, in the covenant of the ever-blessed trinity? These truths lie at the very foundation of all comfortable walking with God: See that thou be well grounded in them. The knowledge of thyself is to bring thee to God: the knowledge of God is to lead thee to walk with him. The one is to teach thee to renounce all trust in thyself. The other is to shew thee, that thou mayest safely place the confidence of thy heart on thy reconciled Father, thy Saviour, and thy guide. Look up to him then, O my soul, and be often praying to him, and saying,

O Lord God, that which I see not, teach thou me. Keep me an humble disciple in the school of Christ. Let me be daily learning there, what I am in myself, a fallen sinful creature, justly deserving everlasting destruction from thy presence. O let me never lose sight of my want of a Saviour, nor ever be without the sense of what he said—"Without me ye can do nothing." Teach me this, thou eternal Spirit. Open thou mine understanding to understand the scriptures. What thou hast revealed in them concerning the Godhead, and concerning the counsels and works of the ever blessed Trinity, that reveal to my soul. Thou hast declared, that no man can say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost:

O Shine

O shine then into my dark mind, and lead me into the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Make me acquainted with his covenant undertakings, and his perfect fulfilling of them, that by resting on his finished salvation, I may find the Father's love in the Son, his Father my Father, and may be brought through thy blessed influence to have fellowship with the Father and the Son O lead me into all truth, thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may know the things which belong to my peace, and may through thee be made wise unto salvation. Amen.

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## C H A P. II.

*The believer is reconciled to God, and has the peace of God ruling in his conscience, and they two walk together: because they are now agreed.*

IT is written in the prophets—"They shall be all taught of God,"—every one of his children shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and what they have been taught in the understanding shall be made practical, that it may have its proper effect upon the conscience. And this is answered, when it comes under the governance of

of the word of God, and faithfully accuses or condemns according to that unerring rule.

Conscience supposes the knowledge of some rule, and it consists in comparing a man's state or actions with that rule, in order to discover whether they agree with it, or not:

The rule is the scripture, the whole revealed will of God, which is the unerring, and the only standard of right and wrong: for all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, to teach the man of God what is truth, and to make him wise in it unto salvation. Fallen man has no means of discovering the will of God, but as it is revealed to him. He has no innate knowledge. He has no implanted principles. He is born as ignorant of God, and of the things of God, as a wild ass's colt. His understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart. And he has no means in his own power of attaining any divine knowledge: for he cannot by searching find out God. The world by its wisdom never did find him out. The Hottentots know as much of him as the Greeks and Romans did: indeed the natural man, let him be ever so wise, knoweth not the things of the Spirit.

Spirit of God, neither **CAN** he know them: because they are spiritually discerned.

The scripture then is the only rule of right and wrong. Conscience has no direction but this rule. Neither ethics, nor metaphysics, no fancied light of dark nature, no lawless law of rebel nature, no human science, whether pretended to be implanted, or by the use of reason to be acquired, have any right to guide the conscience. These are blind leaders of the blind. They undertake, what they are not only unfit, but what they have no warrant for. A parcel of felons in jail may think what they will of their state. They may take it upon them to form a mock court, and to try one another. They may acquit or condemn as they please: but the judge and the jury will pay no regard to their foolish proceedings. There is a word which is to try us at the last day, and by that we should try ourselves at present. It was revealed for this purpose. And when the revealed truth is clearly understood, then conscience is acting aright, if it finds a true verdict for God, either accusing, or else excusing, according to the direction of his unerring word.

And this is the work of the holy Spirit. He enlightened the judgment with the knowledge of the truth, in order to make it practical: which he effects by bringing the conscience

conscience to submit to the sovereignty of God in the law, and to submit to the righteousness of God in the gospel. Herein he displays the omnipotent power of his grace, according to the promise, *John xvi. 8.* He carries with demonstration the conviction of guilt, and the conviction of righteousness to the conscience. By the former he gives the sinner a real heart-felt sense of his sin and misery, and he acknowledges himself a convict of the law, justly deserving all its penalties in time and in eternity. By the latter he sets open a door of hope, shewing him the perfect righteousness of the God-man wrought out for such guilty creatures as he is: he enables him to plead it before the throne, and to trust in it for his acceptance; by which means he finds relief in his conscience, and comfort in his heart. Being justified by faith he has peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What the holy Spirit teaches has life, as well as light in it. He accompanies his doctrine with the power of God. What he has revealed concerning the state of mankind under the fall, he applies with divine evidence to the conscience. Under his influence the sinner reads those scriptures, and feels the truth of them. "As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: through the

" the offence of one judgment came upon all  
 " men to condemnation : for it is written,  
 " there is none righteous, no not one, there  
 " is none that understandeth, there is none  
 " that seeketh after God : they are all gone  
 " out of the way, they are together become  
 " unprofitable, there is none that doeth good,  
 " no not one. Now we know that what  
 " things soever the law, saith, it commands  
 " them who are under the law, that every  
 " mouth may be stopped ; and all the world  
 " may become guilty before God." His  
 mouth is stopped. He has no plea to make.  
 No excuse left. What the law saith, he sub-  
 scribes to. The law brings him in guilty  
 before God, and in his conscience he bears his  
 testimony to the law. He acknowledges it  
 to be holy, just and good, even in its pen-  
 alties, which he deserves to suffer. Formerly  
 he tried, and took great pains to escape them,  
 but now he gives over all those self-righteous  
 attempts. He found, that he laboured in  
 vain to atone for his sins, or to make himself  
 holy. He groans being burdened under the  
 ruins of the fall. His ignorance, rebellion,  
 apostacy, his corruption in every faculty of  
 soul and body, render him unable to take one  
 step in his return to God. He owns it, and  
 confesses, that without Christ he can do no-  
 thing.

O my soul, consider, whether God has  
 taught thee this knowledge of thyself. It is  
 absolutely

absolutely necessary to reconcile thee to him, and to his ways. Thou wilt never heartily agree to walk with him by faith, so long as thou hast any thing of thine own to trust in, or to draw comfort from. Examine then; art thou sensible of thy fall, and dost thou feel the sad effects of it? Dost thou know what it is to be alienated from the life of God? What! dost thou find to this day the opposition of thy sinful nature to the holy law, the flesh lusting in thee against the spirit? Has God thus convinced thee of sin? If he has, then in thy conscience thou submittest to what the law says of thy state. Thy mouth is stopped, and thou art guilty, before God. Thou hast nothing of thine own to urge in arrest of judgment. This is an enlightened conscience: so far it speaks for God, and is guided by his unerring word. O pray to the Lord the Spirit, and beg of him to guide thee into all truth, that he may bring thy conscience to submit to the righteousness of Jesus, and to be a faithful witness for him.

This is his proper work in the soul, and what he undertook in the everlasting covenant. When he is come, says Christ, he shall convince the world of righteousness; he shall testify of me, that I am made of God righteousness to believers; and he shall glorify me, as Jehovah their righteousness: thus he shall teach them my righteousness with which the Father is satisfied, and he shall through

through faith apply it effectually to their consciences, and they shall also be satisfied with it. Being justified by faith they shall have peace with God through their Lord Jesus Christ.

Righteousness is a perfect conformity to the law: if it be tried by the balance of the sanctuary, it is full weight; if by the standard, it is full measure; if judgment be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, it is quite upright. There is no defect in it of any kind. This is the righteousness of the law—it must be perfect and continual, failing in no one point: for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And it is an adjudged case, that there is none righteous, no not one. It is left upon record, that ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

When the holy Spirit has convinced a sinner of his being in this unrighteous state, then it becomes an important enquiry—how can the Judge of all the earth ever look upon and treat a sinner, as if he was a righteous person? To which the gospel answers directly—“ God hath made Christ to be sin “ for us, who knew no sin, that we might be “ made the righteousness of God IN him.” This was agreed upon in the covenant of the eternal Three. The Father undertook to maintain the honour and dignity of his law and

and justice. His co-equal Son undertook for his people to come in their nature, and to stand in their place and stead; to act for them, and to suffer for them. As their surety, he made himself answerable for their debt of obedience, and for their debt of suffering. Accordingly when the great lawfiller cometh into the world he saith, LO, I COME TO DO THY WILL, O GOD. He did it in his infinitely holy life, in which he magnified the precepts of the law, and made them everlastingly honourable. He suffered it in his infinitely holy passion, bearing the sins and sorrows of his people, their curse and wrath in his body and soul upon the tree, until the immense debt being paid, he cried out in the triumph of a conquering, though a dying Jesus, IT IS FINISHED: for through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil: he finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

This is the great leading truth of the gospel, in which the peace of conscience is principally concerned. The justly offended God is here revealed under the character of a reconciled Father. He gave his Son to be a covenant of the people; who was to fulfil all covenant engagements for them, and he has fulfilled them all. The end of his living and dying for them is answered. He has

has finished the transgression, and has made peace by the blood of his cross. He has brought in everlasting righteousness by his divine obedience, and the Lord is well-pleased with *him* for his righteousness sake, yea he is well-pleased also with his body the church. He looks upon all the members, as he look'd upon the head. He accepts them in the beloved. He beholds them in him with perfect delight, and rests in his love. He is his Father, and their Father. He is related to his whole family in heaven and earth in the closest bonds of fatherly affection, and he makes his love known to them, and sheds it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. He would have all his children to address him under this dear name—**OUR FATHER which art in heaven**, and to expect from his fatherly love all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

When this comfortable doctrine is received into the conscience, it silences guilt, and produces peace with God. The gospel comes with full authority to establish it in the conscience: for it is therein revealed and proposed to our belief under the character of a divine **RECORD**, made authentic and properly enrolled in the court of heaven. The witnesses are the eternal Three. Their record is in the nature of a covenant, confirmed by their joint-counsel, and ratified by their joint-oath—the two immutable things,

in which it is impossible for God to lie. He graciously vouchsafed to give the heirs of promise this perfect security for their salvation, that after they had fled to Jesus for refuge, there might be an end of all strife in their consciences, and they might have strong consolation. Accordingly we read, “ There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are ONE.” A record among men is an authentic testimony in writing entered by authority in one of the king’s courts, in order to preserve the proceedings had upon any suit. This record contains the final determination of the judges in that cause, and is their memorial of it, and therefore imports in itself such uncontrollable evidence, as to admit of no proof to the contrary. The matter of the record is never allowed to be tried by a jury, but is of such credit as not to be questioned in any instance. This is the nature of a record in law. And if we receive the witness of men, certainly the witness of God is greater ; for this is the witness of God, which he hath witnessed of his Son—namely—“ He hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” To which the Spirit beareth witness : because the Spirit is truth. He has revealed the covenant of life and peace, which was between the Father and the Son, he has entered it upon record, and every word

word of the record may be pleaded : for it is allowed to be good and valid in the court of heaven. As a powerful advocate he pleads the perfect fulfilling of all righteousness in the life and death of the God-man, and the Father's perfect acceptance of what he did and suffered, as the full redemption-price of all his people, and he carries his cause in the court of conscience. The awakened sinner is convinced, that the work of Jesus is a finished salvation, and that the divine record is a sufficient warrant for him to believe in it. Accordingly he gives it credit, and is enabled to plead it against guilt and fear. Upon which he finds peace with God. Trusting to the blood of sprinkling for pardon, and to the righteousness of Jesus for acceptance ; he then sees God reconciled to him, and that reconciles him to God, and by the Spirit of adoption he cries, *Abba, Father.*

But perhaps it may be said, I believe this, but I do not find peace in my conscience. Nay, but you do not believe it ; if you did, it would certainly bring present relief : for guilt comes from the broken law, and from the apprehension of punishment deserved ; but the law has been restored to its dignity, and made infinitely honourable by the righteousness of Jesus, how can you believe this and yet be under guilt ? The punishment was laid upon Jesus, and he suffered

all that was due to his people, as their atoning sacrifice, how can you believe this, and yet fear that justice will punish you? A debtor would not fear to be arrested, if his surety had paid the sum, and got him a full discharge. A felon with the king's pardon in his pocket would dishonour it greatly, if he was to live in continual dread and terror of suffering for his crime. Examine carefully and pray for the right understanding of your case; and depend upon it, you will find, that either you do not believe the matter of fact, or the record concerning it.

The matter of fact is the method provided for quieting the guilty conscience—a provision of exceeding rich grace and of everlasting efficacy. The Father gave the Son to be the surety for his people, and to live and to die for them, and in their stead. The Son has finished the work, which the Father gave him to do, and is become the author of their eternal salvation.

The record of this fact is in the scripture. Father, Son, and Spirit, the three witnesses in heaven have by covenant and oath attested, that there is life for every one who believeth in Jesus. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Now consider, of what do you doubt? Has Jesus made full atonement for sin, and brought

brought in everlasting righteousness ? Has the Father demonstrated again and again his perfect delight in his person, and his infinite satisfaction in his work. Certainly you cannot question this doctrine, if you believe the scripture to be a divine revelation. Do you doubt then of God's free promise, or of his faithfulness to fulfil it ? What ! Can his word be broken ? Can his promise fail ? His word and promise ratified in the immutable covenant, and sealed with the immutable oath of the eternal Three ? This is your warrant to believe. And do you question the veracity of it ? " He that believeth not " God, hath made him a liar." O what a dreadful sin to give the lie to the holy Trinity ! The Father says, whosoever cometh ; the Son says, all that come, unto me shall be saved ; the Spirit says, come, whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, and be saved. Are not these faithful sayings worthy of all credit ? especially as they are delivered with divine authority under the great seal of heaven. If doubts still remain, pray against them and meditate upon the unreasonableness as well as the wickedness of them, and continue to hear and to read the word (for faith cometh, and groweth too by hearing) that you may be enabled to put honour upon it by venturing your soul upon the divine faithfulness to make it good to you.

Perhaps you may believe the record, which God hath given of his Son, but you cannot do it with stedfastness : you can at times stay your mind upon God with sweet peace, but you are not able to maintain it : yea, you lose it when you want it most. How in this case shall the believer keep the peace of God ruling always in his conscience ?

It is to be maintained in the same way, by which it was first received. It came by believing, and is thereby strengthened. By the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ peace was made between God and man, by the sprinkling of his blood peace is made between man and God. When this is applied to the conscience by the holy Spirit, and received by faith, there is a continual preservative against guilt : " For the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Here is the witness of God ; and it is always the same. This believed will always bring the same cleansing virtue, and keep the conscience purged from dead works. If at any time guilt defile it, then unbelief has entered, and has been denying, either that the blood of Christ does cleanse from all sin, or that the divine testimony concerning it does deserve credit. Guilt cannot easily enter into the conscience but by one of these two ways. Examine, and see which it is. Do you doubt of the virtue of Christ's blood, or, of the truth of God's record concerning it ?

You

You reply, I dare not question either of them, yet nevertheless I cannot with any settled comfort maintain peace with God. But it is your privilege to maintain it, confirmed to you by the royal charter of grace, and ratified in it by many express promises. Jesus has made peace by the blood of his cross, and if you believe what the God of truth says of it, peace should rule in your heart always: for all things are well ordered for you, and sure in the everlasting covenant. On the part of God all is unalterably fixed and settled. What is it then, which unsettles you? Is it something you find in yourself? Is it from in dwelling sin, remaining corruption, a body of sin, and death, or from the weakness of your faith and of your other graces? What! have you forgotten, that from all these the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth? Is it from a suspicion, that your peace is not right, because it ebbs and flows? This should humble, but not discourage you: because there is a gracious provision made to remove your suspicion. God has taken the charge both of you and of your peace: he keeps both by his mighty power, as it is written, the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding shall keep with a safeguard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. You are as safe in the hand of God at the lowest ebb, as at the highest spring-tide of sensible comfort: because your safeguard is almighty,

and he is equally concerned about your peace, whether you feel it, or not. Your sense of it may vary, but he varies not. There is in him no variableness, nor shadow of turning. How should the belief of this stay your mind upon your God, and keep guilt out of the conscience, even when you are walking in darkness, and have no light ?

O my soul, meditate upon those precious truths. Give thyself wholly to them. Consider, how deeply they enter into the very being of thy peace. Unless they be understood, thou canst not know the way of peace ; and unless they be received by faith, thy conscience will not be purged from guilt and unbelief. And while these defile it, thou canst not look upon God as reconciled, or delight thyself in him or in his ways. Can two walk together, except they be agreed ? But when they are agreed, and of one mind, then walking with God becomes pleasant, and all his paths are peace.

Search then and examine thyself, O my soul, and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but closely and thoroughly by the light of the divine word, and under the teaching of the divine Spirit. Dost thou understand what is revealed concerning the way of peace—what was covenanted in the counsel of the eternal Three—and what has been done in consequence of it ? Jesus Christ is the great peace-maker. He has

has made peace through the blood of his cross. The Father sent him, gave him to be a covenant of the people, to fulfil for them all righteousness, and to be their atoning sacrifice. The Father has seen the work which he gave him to do, and has accepted it; is perfectly satisfied with it, and therefore is infinitely delighted with him and with all his. He would now be known by the high stile and title of the **GOD OF PEACE**. Fury is not in him to those, whom he sees in the beloved. He is a Father, fully, for ever reconciled to all his children in Christ Jesus. He loves them, as he loves him, with every kind feeling of the most tender parent. And he will bring every one of them to partake with their glorified head of the blessings of his everlasting love.

If thine understanding be enlightened with this knowledge of God, is it effectual in thy conscience? Canst thou plead it there? This is the principal thing. Hast thou a good conscience, freed from guilt and condemnation, by believing the record which God hath given of his Son? He is well pleased with him for his righteousness sake. His soul delighted in the sweet smelling favour of his Son's sacrifice. Because he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore the Father hath highly exalted him. This is the witness of God. Dost thou yield to it,

and give it full credit? What! canst thou set to thy seal that God is true, and that what satisfied him has perfectly satisfied thee, and therefore the peace of God rules in thy conscience always and by all means?

Remember, this is thy privilege. Thou art called to the enjoyment of it. The evidence is as full, as could be desired for the ending of all strife in thy conscience. The greatest honour, thou canst put upon the divine witnesses, is so to end it, as to suffer no appeal to be made from their decree. Thy conscience should join issue. It should say the same that God does. It should plead thy discharge from guilt under the broad seal of heaven; and should stop the mouth of unbelief with those words written in golden letters in the royal charter of grace—"There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus—they are freely forgiven ALL trespasses"—"They are justified from ALL things—thy sins and iniquities, says God himself, will I remember NO MORE." These are the immutable words of truth. They cannot be broken. O my soul, put honour upon them. Believe them without doubt or wavering. Why dost thou draw back thy confidence? Trust, and be not afraid. Thou mayest safely venture to believe all that the Lord hath spoken. He will make it

it good ; and the more thou believest, the more will be made good. More faith will bring thee in a richer revenue of peace. The Lord increase thy faith. May it entirely influence thy conscience, that it may agree with God ; neither questioning the infinite value of the righteousness and atonement of Immanuel, nor yet the faithfulness of his promise, under which thou claimest them—“**WHOSOEVER WILL** may take them “freely.”

Let thy faith be ever so well established, yet thou wilt meet with something every day to try it ; but remember the foundation on which thou standest, cannot fail, and none, nothing shall remove thee from it. The Lord brought thee to build upon this foundation. He hath begun the good work, and he will not leave his work unfinished. The top stone shall certainly be brought forth with shouting **GRACE—GRACE** : for his love is like himself. His purposes, his word, his works change not. What if thou feel many things wrong in thyself, thou art sometimes low in spirits ; thou canst not be pleased with thy corruptions, and thou art not pleased with thy duties, thy graces are weak, thy love not as it should be, thy best services unprofitable ; yet these very things rightly understood, and improved by the teaching of the holy Spirit will be the means of establishing thy conscience in the peace of

God. They will lead thee every day to a greater dependence upon sovereign grace: for they will leave thee nothing to trust in, but the righteousness and the atonement of Immanuel, nothing to keep thee, but his faithfulness to his word and work, and nothing to bless thee, but his free covenant mercy. Thus they will work together for thy good. Trials will settle thee. Enemies will confirm thee in peace. Troubles will bring thee nearer to God. Amidst all discouragements thou wilt have this promise to stay thy soul upon—"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." His friendship is fixt. It springs from the purpose and love of his own breast, and therefore was and is always unchangeably the same in him. Whom he loveth he loveth unto the end.

Well then, O my soul, thou hast examined thyself. How is it with thee? Dost thou know the way of peace? Art thou at peace with God being justified by faith? Canst thou plead this peace, and maintain it in thy conscience? Is it a good conscience, does it witness for God? Is it a pure conscience, cleansed from guilt and condemnation? Is it satisfied, that the Father is perfectly reconciled through the life and death of his Son? And is it satisfied with the divine record, giving thee a free grant of the benefits of his life and death, and putting thee into

into possession by believing ? Art thou of one heart and of one mind in this matter with the Father, and now being at peace with him agreed to walk in his way ? If indeed he has been thus gracious unto thee, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise him for the exceeding riches of his love. What a mercy is it, that he has brought thee into the way of peace ! O go on : fear not. Set out daily with an holy humble boldness to walk with thy God. And for the guiding of thy feet in his way, and that thy steps may not decline from it, be diligent in hearing and reading the word of God. Study it. Pray over it. Mind what encouragement it gives thee : " Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil; that is to say, his flesh, and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." *Heb. x. 19, 20, &c.* What perfect peace is here proclaimed to the children of God ! Sin had separated them from him, but there is access through Jesus. He is the way to the Father. He is a new way, in opposition to the old way of works, which upon the fall was shut for ever.

ever. He is a living way, all that are alive to God live by the faith of the Son of God. He is a consecrated way, every thing needful for their holy walk being provided in him. And they are required to walk in this way with boldness; trusting to the blood of Jesus, and depending on the intercession of the high priest over the house of God, they have access with confidence into the holiest. It is their undoubted privilege to draw near with a true heart, not like a double minded man wavering and unstable; but with full assurance of faith, entirely satisfied that God in Christ has nothing in his breast, but love towards them; therefore they should believe in him, and serve him without fear, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, maintaining peace with God through the continual application of the blood of Jesus, and having their bodies washed with pure water, body and soul being cleansed from the guilt and filth of sin by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

O may this be my happy experience. May I ever have grace to draw near to my reconciled Father with a good conscience. Yea, Lord, this is my heart's desire. I would walk with thee day by day in perfect peace. O deny me not the request of my lips. Glory be to thy free love that through Jesus I am suffered to have access into thy presence,

fence, and am commanded to come with boldness into the holiest of all. Lo I come before thee, holy Father, to plead the blood shedding and the righteousness of thy dear Son; and I hope my plea will be admitted through the intercession of the high priest of the house of God. O look, thou God of peace, upon the face of thy Beloved. See me in him. I desire to be found in him. And for his sake let the faithful witness for thy love in Jesus abide with me, that in hearing and reading thy word, in prayer and meditation he may increase my faith in thee and love to thee.

O God the Holy Ghost, I beseech thee to make practical upon my heart what thou hast revealed in scripture of the Father's love. Deliver me from guilt and condemnation, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Apply it effectually. Apply it continually. Help me to believe with more comfort in my conscience, and with more stedfastness in my walk, that his blood cleanseth from all sin. O blessed Spirit, carry on thy work in my soul. Lead me from faith to faith, that I may at all times have freedom to enter within the veil to a reconciled God and Father, and may be able to maintain peace with him against doubts and fears, against corruptions and enemies. O teach me to draw near to him with a true heart, stedfastly persuaded of his

his love, and in full assurance of faith. This is thy gracious office. O fulfil it in me, that my heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and my body washed with pure water. Let me find grace sufficient for me for Jesus sake, to whom with thee O Father, and the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, be equal honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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## C H A P. III.

*The believer in his heart cleaves to God, and walks with him in love.*

**T**HIS depends entirely upon a good conscience. There can be no love of God, unless there be first peace with God. No convinced sinner can love him, until he believes him to be reconciled. While guilt remains in the conscience, enmity will keep its place in the heart: for so long as he looks upon his sins unpardoned, and God the just avenger of them, he must consider him as a jealous God, and a consuming fire. In this view there is every thing that can increase his guilty fears. And while these defile the conscience, instead of walking with God, he would run away from him, and

and like the first offenders, he would foolishly try to hide himself from the presence of God.

But when the holy Spirit has discovered the way of peace, and has enabled the sinner to find peace, being pardoned and justified through faith in Christ Jesus, then he looks upon God in another light. He can view him, according as he has proclaimed himself—the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. Under this endearing character the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in scripture. Thus would he be considered in the covenant of grace—related in the nearest bond of affection to all his children. He is their father, the father of mercies, freely loving, freely forgiving, freely accepting them in the beloved. The holy Spirit convinces them of it, and sheds the Father's love to them abroad in their hearts; the sense of which sweetly inclines them to love him again. Love begets love. God has put on the tender bowels of an ever-loving parent, and he gives them the affection of dutiful children. They love him, because he first loved them. Then it is the delight of their souls to cultivate and improve this love on their part, and it becomes their heaven upon earth to walk

walk with their God in the ways, wherein he has appointed to meet them, to love them, and to bless them.

The main point then in the christian walk is to know how to maintain peace in the conscience: because this is the powerful motive, upon which the believer first sets out, and it is the great spring which keeps him going on. While his conscience continues pure and undefiled, and the peace of God rules in it, all is well. He does not stop, he does not halt in the way. But when guilt enters, unbelief certainly follows close after it, and then there is a fresh controversy in the court of conscience. Many doubts arise, and afford matter for strife and debate. The sense of peace is not only disturbed, but is also for a time destroyed by such suspicions as these—"Am I freely pardoned—Is God fully reconciled to me"—"Is he still my loving Father? I fear not." "I have done so and so—He is certainly displeased with me, and therefore I dare not approach him, as I used to do, with love and confidence." This is an evil conscience. It is not purged from dead works: because guilt is still in it, and this keeps the soul at a distance from God. It begets a coldness and a shyness to him, and by shutting out the comfortable sense of his love makes way for fear of wrath. Then the motives to walk with God lose their influence,

fluence, and an evil heart of unbelief tempts the man to depart from the living God.

Look well then, O my soul, to this leading truth, which has such universal influence over the christian walk. Attend to the peace of thy conscience. See it be true peace, and mind it be well settled. Learn to maintain it upon gospel motives. The heart follows the determination of conscience ; and cleaves to the Lord, or departs from him, according as the conscience excuses or accuses. It is therefore absolutely necessary for our peace, that we should know how God has been perfectly reconciled in Christ Jesus. This character of him in the scriptures should be studied. Whoever has been enabled to call him **Abba**, Father, should implore the assistance of the holy Spirit for an increase of faith, and should make use of all appointed means for his growth in the knowledge of the love of his heavenly Father. The apostle is upon this subject in *Romans* v.—a chapter abounding with powerful arguments to establish the peace of God in the conscience ; in order that the love of God may rule in the heart. He gives us this account of the privileges of a justified man. He has peace with God through Jesus Christ—by whom he has free access to God—is in a state of grace—stands in it by the power of God—has reason to rejoice (come what will) in hope of the glory to be revealed—and whatever he meets

meets with in the way to glory should increase the rejoicing of his hope, and confirm his heart in the love of God to him. Observe how divinely the apostle speaks : “ There-  
 “ fore being justified by faith we have peace  
 “ with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ;  
 “ by whom also we have access by faith in-  
 “ to this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice  
 “ in hope of the glory of God ; and not only  
 “ so, but we rejoice in tribulations also, know-  
 “ ing well that tribulation worketh patience,  
 “ and patience experience, and experience  
 “ hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed,  
 “ because the love of God is shed abroad in  
 “ our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given  
 “ unto us.”

What privileges ! how many, how free, how blessed are here declared to be the portion of the justified man ! which he is to enjoy in his reconciled God. Each of them tending to establish peace in his conscience, and love in his heart, that he may delight himself in God and in his ways ! The first and chief blessing in experience, which draws after it all the rest, is the Spirit —

*The Holy Ghost is given unto him, to be a witness for Jesus, and to shed abroad the Father's love through him. He comes as the Spirit of life to quicken the soul, which had been dead in trespasses and sins, and to bring it to the knowledge of salvation, which he does secondly by the gift of faith.*

*Being*

*Being justified by faith.* He enables the sinner to believe in the finished work of the God-man, and to trust to the free grant of it in the word of God ; whereby he sees himself fully justified : Through the atonement of Jesus freed from sin and guilt, through the righteousness of Jesus entitled to life and glory ; and therefore, thirdly, he has

*Peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord*—He sees God is at peace with him—perfectly and continually reconciled. The peace is everlasting which was made through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The belief of this quiets and satisfies the sinner's conscience ; which being purged by the blood and justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ his Lord is at peace, is freed from guilty fears, and is reconciled to God, yea to the justice of God, who can now be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. To what high honour is he then called ? He is admitted into friendship with God, and has

*Fourthly, Access by faith into this grace, wherein he stands*—access to a mercy seat, to which he is invited to come freely, as a beloved child to an affectionate parent. Boldness and access with confidence are required and commanded. “ Let us come boldly to the “throne of grace : having boldness to enter “ into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,” let us

us by faith make much use of that new and living way, which he hath opened for us. O what a mercy is it thus to have access to a gracious Father ! how much is the mercy increased by his settling his children in it ! We STAND in it, says the apostle, denoting the being fixed in a state of perfect acceptance, conferred by sovereign grace, brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God. How strengthening to faith, how encouraging to hope ! for

Fifthly, *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Faith relies upon the truth of what God hath promised, and hope waits for the enjoyment of the good in the promise, but more especially for the glory which is to be revealed. This hope of glory is full of rejoicing : because every thing which hope looks at and draws its joy from depends on the truth and faithfulness of a covenant with God. There can be no failing on his part, and therefore on the believer's there can be no disappointment. On this ground hope casts its anchor, both sure and stedfast, and finds all safe during the storms of life, yea has many a sweet foretaste of the promised glory, brought into the soul by these very storms : for

Sixthly, *We rejoice in tribulations also.* These are so far from taking away the joy of the justified man, that they tend greatly to increase

increase it, and to make it more holy, as well as more happy. Tribulations produce a plentiful harvest of blessings, they bring forth

*Patience*, giving occasion to exercise the graces of the Spirit, to find the truth and the power of them, and thereby working submission under the cross to the will of God. “It is good for me, says David, that I have been afflicted ;” his troubles brought him to God—“Before I was afflicted I went astray.” His troubles kept him near to God, dependant on the divine strength to bear them with patience, and for an happy issue out of them. Whereby he learnt

*Experience*, which follows suffering and patience. Tribulations teach us what we are as sinners, and what God is to his reconciled children. They make us sensible of our weakness, and of our being strong only in the Lord—of our misery, and of his comforts—of what we deserve, and of what he saves us from—they bring us to live out of ourselves upon the sure mercies of a covenant God, : whereby our hope in him being tried, and by trials confirmed, we discover his love to us in suffering, and by daily experience become quite satisfied, that our

*Hope* is the grace of the holy Spirit : for it answers the scripture-character ; it rejoices in tribulation. It has good reason so to do. It experiences God’s faithfulness. Every thing

thing promised being made good to us in time, we thereby grow up into the full assurance of hope, that we shall not fail of receiving the promised glory. And this

*Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us.* He is given to satisfy our hearts of the love of God to us, and to lead us to study the nature, and the perfections of his love. Behold! what manner of love, what a free, full, sovereign, and everlasting love, the Father hath bestowed upon us. It is actually bestowed and enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost. He shews us how the Father loved us, even when we were without strength; yea herein God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were sinners and enemies, he gave his Son to live and die for us, much more then being now justified, we shall be saved from wrath, and brought to glory, through him. How does this commend and set off the love of God! It is the first cause of all the graces here mentioned, and bestows them upon the most unworthy. Faith, justification by faith, access to God, standing in a justified state, rejoicing in hope of glory, and rejoicing in the way to it even in tribulations, because they exercise and improve patience, and put our graces to such trials, as convince us, that they are the true graces of the holy Spirit, and that we

shall

shall never be ashamed of our hope in God. In this golden chain of experience love is the uppermost link. It was the first, and draws after it all the rest. The free love of the Father gave his Son for us, and with him gave us all things. The same love has now given his Spirit to us, and he has enabled us to know and to believe, that we are justified, have access to a reconciled God, stand accepted before him, &c. and that he is our loving God and Father in Jesus. The sense of this warms the heart, and sweetly and powerfully influences the affections to delight in, and to walk in love with such an exceedingly gracious and merciful God.

In this delightful portion of scripture the holy Spirit teaches us, how he brings sinners to know that God loves them. It is by believing in the righteousness and atonement of the Son of God. Hence spring peace and love—peace with God in the conscience, and love to God in the heart. There is an inseparable connection between those two graces. The one cannot exist without the other. Whoever knows the God of peace will find that God is love; for being justified by faith, he will thereby see that God is at peace with him, and himself in a state of free acceptance before him, in which he shall stand and be kept safe, until he receive the promised glory. The hope of which will be confirmed by his daily experience of God's faithfulness,

faithfulness, making all things, even tribulations, work together for his good in the way to glory: thus will the holy Spirit satisfy him of the love of God to his soul. And the persuasion of his love begets love. It softens the hard heart. It warms the cold heart. It works kindly upon all the affections, and by setting before them every possible good to be enjoyed in their reconciled God, it mightily disposes them to seek their supreme happiness in walking humbly and closely with him.

Attend then, O my soul, to this scripture. Meditate upon the experience of which it treats. Pray for it. Pray for more of it. And above all observe the great truth here taught thee by the Holy Ghost, namely, that thou canst not have any true love of God, but what arises from the sense of his being at peace with thee in Jesus. O beware of false teachers: for there is great reason. Many boast of their loving God for his own inherent loveliness. A fundamental mistake. Mysticks, quakers, natural religion men, dreaming metaphysicians, and the motley tribe of moralists and deists, pretend to love an absolute God, without viewing him in the covenant of grace, or as he has revealed himself in the incarnation of his Son. There has been no love of this kind in any heart upon earth for near six thousand years. Adam in Paradise might  
love

love him thus. But when driven out of Paradise for sin he could love him so no more. The promised seed of the woman, the word made flesh, became then the object of his faith, and the only ground of his love. The scripture has clearly determined this—"We love him, because he first loved us—And in this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." When the Holy Ghost has taught this love of God to sinners, and by believing has manifested it to their hearts; then they love him upon christian principles; and sinners cannot love him upon any other. They love him for that infinite mercy, which led him to send his only begotten Son into the world to finish the salvation of his people. They love him for sending the Holy Ghost to enable them to see the everlasting sufficiency of this salvation, and to believe the record of God concerning it; whereby they come to experience how much the Father loved them. This is heaven begun. The Father's love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost is the foretaste of glory. Whoever enjoys it has found, what is more to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. O it is indeed heaven upon earth. To preserve it, to improve it, is become the one

study of the happy believer. The parting of his soul is after more of this love. The prayer of his faith is, O thou eternal Spirit, help me so to walk with my most loving Father, as that I may maintain peace with him in my conscience, and a growing love to him in my heart, until thou bring me to the enjoyment of everlasting peace and love.

The prayer of a righteous man prevaleth much, being offered with energy. By the love of the Spirit it is answered. He not only preserves, but also increases his own graces. He leads the believer to fresh discoveries of the Father's love, and puts him into possession of the exceeding rich treasures of it. He helps him to draw very strong arguments for the comfort of his heart from the perfect FREENESS of divine love. Thus he reasons—

Although I am beset with temptations, and assaulted with corruptions, and in a world of troubles, yet I need not fear, but God will bring me safe through all; for I know he loves me. It is plain he does. I could never have loved him, unless he had first freely loved me. My love is only the reflection of his. I have been convinced of sin, but it was not from myself: the conviction was of God. I have been convinced of righteousness, and I put my whole trust

trust in the righteousness of Jesus. He is the only ground of my hope. I venture my soul upon the sure foundation, which he hath laid. And this faith is not of myself. It is the gift of God. I ascribe it to his sovereign grace, that I have been enabled to look upon the Father as reconciled to me, pardoning me through the blood-shedding of his Son, accounting me righteous through the obedience of his Son, and in him accepting, loving, and blessing me. How could I experience these things but by the power of the Holy Ghost? And for what did I deserve to experience them? The reason must be found in the riches of his own free grace. Did the Father foresee any thing good in me, for which he chose me in his Son? Was it for any worthiness of mine, that the Son vouchsafed to take flesh, and to live and to die for me? Was it for any foreseen works, faithfulness, or diligence in means that the Holy Ghost called me to know, to believe, and to enjoy the Father's love through the Son's salvation? O, no. Away with such thoughts. I dare claim nothing for mine own, but sin and shame. Not unto me, Lord, not unto me, but unto thee be all the glory. It was the good pleasure of thine own will, which chose me before the foundation of the world, and accepted me in the beloved; and now I know that thy counsels of old are faithfulness and

truth. I experience the happy fruit and effect of them. I am brought to believe in thee, and to love my God and Father, which I am satisfied I could never have done, if thy free love had not first purposed to save me, and now carried thy purposes into execution. To the praise of the glory of thy distinguishing grace I am in possession of the things, which accompany salvation. O give me more grace, that I may daily make a better use of them, and may return thee better praise for thy free gifts of free grace.

It is free, and it is also COVENANT love. This is another of its divine properties : God commendeth his love towards the heirs of promise by giving them full security for its unchangeableness. And this view the holy Spirit opens to them for the support of their faith in times of trial. When they are walking in darkness and have no light, troubled on every side, without are fightings, within are fears, when in great heaviness through failings in duty, through risings of corruption, or, through manifold temptations, then he discovers to them the treasures of covenant love, and enables them to draw rich consolation from that heavenly storehouse. An heir of promise under his teaching is often supported in this way. It is true, I am in trouble, but not forsaken. What if every thing I have and am in myself makes against me, yet God is on my side, a covenant God : for

for I believe the eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and with manifold wisdom ordered all things relating to the heirs of promise. For their sakes and to end all strife in their consciences about the certainty of their salvation, it pleased the blessed Trinity to enter into covenant, and to confirm their covenant by oath, thus giving them two immutable things to trust in, in which it is impossible for God to lie. O how strengthening to faith is this view of the unchangeableness of covenant love! If it be but a man's covenant, being properly signed and sealed, no one disannulleth or addeth thereto. And who shall disannul or add to the covenant of the Trinity? The creature cannot. God will not. His purpose of bringing many sons to glory is unalterably fixed in his own mind, and in order to make it a sure ground for their faith, he confirmed his immutable covenant by his immutable oath. On this security I rest my soul. A covenant God has enabled me to trust in his covenant engagements. Hence I see every thing relating to my salvation absolutely certain in the counsel and covenant of God; and I look upon my faith to be one of the effects of my being in the covenant. And faith as a covenant gift is an immutable gift. What a blessing is it that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance! It has been given me on the behalf of Christ to believe.

And is not this from covenant love? What else could bring me to trust in covenant faithfulness? Therefore, by believing I have immutable things to depend upon for the certainty of my salvation. Upon them would I stay my soul, as well I may, and fix my heart upon them. O that I could bring more glory to my covenant God by trusting him with unshaken confidence! His love to me demands it at my hands. His love contrived the plan of salvation. Love provided every thing needful to carry it into execution. The evidence, which he has given of this, was from the overflowings of love. His word of promise, ratified by covenant, confirmed by oath, the oath of the holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, made to satisfy the heirs of promise of the immutability of the divine will concerning them—O what miracles of love are these! And all to assure them, that the heart of Jehovah is invariably towards them for good! Yes, Lord, this is the great love wherewith thou lovest me. And this is the evidence of thy love. Thou hast brought me to believe it, and to put some honour upon it. I desire to trust to thy covenant engagements without wavering. Establish, strengthen, settle my faith. Increase it from day to day, that I may grow in the knowledge and experience of that love which passeth knowledge. For

It is a free, a covenant, and also an ever-lasting love. This is another of its most glorious properties. His love knows neither beginning nor end. It is without variableness or shadow of turning. The heart of God is always one and the same towards his chosen people: for he loveth them freely. The motives to it were all in, and from his own breast. The covenant was distinguishing love, secured to the heirs of promise by the most solemn engagements. And this crowns all. His love is of the same date with the covenant—not only before all worlds, but also from eternity. Therefore it is frequently called in scripture an everlasting covenant, and covenant-love is said so to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: whereby before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Here is a never-failing source of comfort to a believing heart. Meditate, O my soul, upon it. Consider, what God hath done for thee, and give him the glory of his precious love. Has he not called thee by his Spirit, working in thee in due season? Hast thou not obeyed the call? Dost thou not depend upon the finished work

of God, thy Saviour ? Art thou not justified freely by faith in him ? Art thou not seeking daily to mortify the works of the flesh, and thy earthly members, and that thy mind may be drawn up to high and heavenly things ? Certainly these are good proofs of the purposes of the Father's love towards thee : because these are the happy effects of his purposes now taking place in thy soul. O how greatly should this consideration establish and confirm thy faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed by Christ, and thereby kindle thy love towards God. He has indeed drawn thee by the sweet attraction of his Spirit unto himself, and has explained to thee the motive for his so doing—“ Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.” His love discovered to thee in time is the fruit of his love before time : for the one is the effect of the other. If love had not been always in his heart towards thee, thy heart could never have been drawn in love to him. But he has drawn it. And thou art seeking to have it drawn more closely to him. Is it not thy daily wish ? O for more love to my gracious Father—what a love has he shewn to me—what a free, covenant, everlasting love ! And yet, alas ! what poor returns do I make him ? Holy Spirit of love, raise and exalt my affections, and let the consideration of the wonderful love of my

my heavenly Father to me increase mine to him, and let mine abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all sensible experience.

The holy Spirit, who is the great teacher, and manifester of the Father's love, has revealed these properties of it in scripture for the establishment of the faith of the children of God. He would have them believe assuredly, that God is the Father, not in name only but in deed and in truth; that he has the bowels of the tenderest parent, and that he freely, fully, everlastinglly loves them in his dear Son. As he loves him, so he loves them. He embraces the head and the members with the same affection. And because they can hardly believe this in times of trial and trouble, the holy Spirit would therefore satisfy their hearts of it by discovering to them the unchangeableness of their Father's love, as it has been manifested in the divine covenant, and confirmed with the divine oath. In both which the witness of the Father to his children is given in this manner—— I have freely loved you, I have engaged to love you, and I will ever be mindful of my covenant engagements—as I live, saith the Lord, I will love you unto the end-- yea, I will bless you with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus --what he, your elder brother, is now in glory, that will my love make you—the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed; but my kind-

ness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on you.

These are faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptance. O evil heart of unbelief, what pretence hast thou to reason against the truth of them? O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt of receiving the goodness of them? Your Father is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should alter his purpose. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Yes, the purpose of his heart spoken with his mouth shall be made good with his arm: all his perfections stand engaged to establish his faithful word, and therefore it is a safe ground to build and to rest upon. Trusting to it the believer may boldly claim the promised blessings of his Father's love, and with a hope that will never make him ashamed he may expect a growing enjoyment of its free covenant and eternal blessings.

Well then, O my soul, thou hast considered the subject. What are thy sentiments of the love of the Father? Are they such as the scripture teaches? Take heed of error. A little mistake here will have dreadful effects upon thy walk. Dost thou believe, that thou coming to the Father through faith in the life and death of his co-equal Son, art pardoned and justified before him,

him, and that this thy coming to the Father through the Son is from the grace of the Spirit? Therefore the Three that bear record in heaven do witness to thy being an object of covenant love. Does this witness keep thy conscience quiet, and thy heart happy? Canst thou plead it against guilt and fear, and maintain the influence of it in dark and trying times? The love of thy heavenly Father is immutable: dost thou experience it to be so? It is everlasting: canst thou depend upon it as such? It has provided all blessings for thee in Jesus: art thou receiving them out of his fulness, grace for grace? It is proposed to thy faith in *John xvii.* and in *Eph. iii.* as a never failing spring of consolation. Read and try, whether thou art practically acquainted with what is there written. Examine the character of the Father's love; and be assured what is not agreeable to it, is not the teaching of the holy Spirit. His office in thy soul is to witness to what he has revealed in the scripture, to explain it to thine understanding, to make it the ground of thy faith, and the enjoyment of thy heart. Dost thou then understand, and believe, and enjoy the Father's love according to what the holy Spirit has testified of it?

Perhaps thou art clear in thine understanding, but through the weakness of thy faith hast but little enjoyment of the love of

God

God. Why is thy faith weak? Search into the cause, (depend upon it God is not the cause) and having discovered it, enquire into the remedy. There is provision made in the covenant for all the infirmities of thy faith: for it was well ordered in all things and sure, and thy faith was well ordered and sure—infallible securities were provided in the covenant to make it sure. That thou shouldst have it, that thou shouldst keep it, and keep it too unto the end, the blessed Trinity have engaged by their immutable counsel, and their immutable oath. Therefore thou art now kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The power of God, which is thy keeper, has given thee faith, and keeps thy faith, that it fail not. Thou and it are well kept. A covenant God has the charge of both. Almighty love watches over thee, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Till these fail, thy faith cannot fail. O what powerful motives are these to induce thee to believe without wavering! Consider them carefully. And may the Lord render them the means of strengthening thy faith, and of thereby enabling thee to cleave more closely in love to thy heavenly Father.

It may be thou art hindered from living by unshaken faith, because thou hast so little love to God—he ought to have all thy heart and soul, and mind and strength, but it

it grieves thee to observe what a small part he has of them. This view is always humbling. Our love at best is not what it ought to be. It is not constant : it ebbs and flows. It is not perfect : the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit. It is not what God deserves, as payment for love received : who will compute the full value of his love to one redeemed sinner ? On earth it surpasseth knowledge. In heaven it surpasseth all returns of praise. The highest love of glorified saints is only acknowledgment, but not payment. They are perfectly humble, and therefore willing that God should have all the glory of their salvation. To him they ascribe it. The same mind in thee would refine thy love, and make it something like theirs. When thou art considering thy love to God, and ashamed at the sight of it, then look at his. Look especially at his, when there is little. Believing views of his will increase thine. Thine has nothing else to excite it, or to nourish it. Thou art not called upon to warm thyself with the sparks of thy love to God, but with the pure constant flame of his love to thee. His is to keep up thine. His is the first cause, and thine is but the effect. The experience of his will heal all the infirmities of thine. When thy love is little, unsettled, cold, and dull, then study the divine properties of his : these rightly understood

understood will increase, settle, warm, and actuate thine affections. By believing meditation thou wilt find a pardon provided for thy little love: the sense of it will comfort thy conscience. Thy heart will grow hot within thee: while thou art musing the fire will kindle. It will break out. Thou wilt speak with thy tongue praise and thanksgiving to thy loving God and Father.

Thou art willing then, O my soul, and ready to set out to follow thy God. Under the influence of the holy Spirit thou hast chosen him for thy portion, and in a constant dependence upon his grace thou hast taken his way for thy daily walk. How great is the love, wherewith he loveth thee! Survey it. Measure, if thou canst, the dimensions of it in thine own particular case. The more thou art acquainted with it, the readier wilt thou be to give him all the glory of it, and to make such acknowledgments, as these.

I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that being justified by faith I have found peace, and free access to a reconciled God. We are agreed, and now I desire to walk with him. He is my Father in Jesus, and I know he has bowels of the tenderest affection for me. I ought not, it would be base in me, to question it, since he has sown his love abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost:

Ghost: who has made me of one mind, of one heart, and of one way with himself. His way is become mine: for he has reconciled me to it by causing me to see, that he chose me freely, as an object of his electing love, that he gave his Son to finish salvation work for me, and that he has now given his Spirit to me, who has called me and given me ears to hear, who has bestowed on me faith and hope, and has enabled me to look upon these as fruits of the Father's covenant grace, and everlasting favour. O what exceeding riches of love are these! If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. What am I, that I should be accepted in the beloved? His Father mine. He sees me, loves me, yea blesses me in him. My title is clear to all spiritual blessings, because God being my God in Jesus, all things are mine. He will make them all work together for my good. He that with-held not his own Son, but gave him for me, how shall he not with him freely give me all things? Having his free grant of them in the word of promise, and trusting to his faithfulness, I have set out to walk with my divine friend and Father, hoping to enjoy his laying presence all the way to heaven. I would not aim at getting any new title to his love, but to have new enjoyment. Every day I am seeking for more knowledge, and for more experience of his abundant

dant love to me in his beloved Son. And for this end I would walk close with him in his way—not to buy his love, it is inestimable—not to merit it, free grace and merit cannot stand together—not that I may deserve it for my walk, but may freely receive it of him in my walk—not that he may give it me for walking with him, but that in walking with him I may enjoy what he has already given me. His love is a free gift. I would by faith enjoy it in time, as I hope by sense to enjoy it in eternity. Whatever blessing, strength, victory, or comfort I stand in need of, I look to the fulness, which he has laid up in Jesus, and from thence I receive it. I read my title to it, and I take possession of it, for nothing done in me or by me, now or at any other time, but only in and for the free grace of his Father and my Father. While I can live thus by simple faith I find I get on well. The sense of his free, covenant, everlasting love keeps my heart happy, and makes walking with him my delight, O that he may enable me to press forward, that I may hold my confidence, and the rejoicing of my hope steadfast unto the end! And why need I doubt of it? Since he has me in his keeping. His love has bound itself to me by covenant engagements, which are my full security for what he has declared, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

These

These desires, I am persuaded, are from thee, O Father of mercies. I could never have sought my happiness in thy love, unless thou hadst first loved me. O grant me then the desires of my heart. What thy good Spirit has put me upon seeking, let me by his grace find continually. He has manifested to me thy perfect reconciliation to thy people through the life and death of Jesus. It has been given me on his behalf to believe this. I have therefore taken thee for my God and my portion, and I would so walk with thee as to obtain a growing knowledge and experience of thy love. For this cause I bow my knees unto thee, holy Father. O hear and answer the prayer of faith. Give me grace to walk with thee in love all the way to glory. I ask it in the name of Jesus: for thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven, and earth is named. One Father, one family, one love. Thou receivest all thy children, whether in heaven or earth, into the same near relation, and embracest them with the same dear affection in thy beloved Son. O what a mercy is this! Blessed, for ever blessed be thy fatherly love, which chose me to be of thy family, and which has brought me to know that I am a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. I thank thee for giving me the desire to live as such, and to walk worthy of my high calling. O grant me then according

ording to the riches of thy glory, (out of thine infinite treasury of grace, and to the praise of the glory of thy grace) to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. He is the promise of the Father. All thy children have their new birth, and every faculty of the new man from him, and by the working of his mighty power they are kept, as well as renewed day by day: for without him they can do nothing. Of this he has thoroughly convinced me. I know I cannot call thee Father, nor believe in thee, nor love thee, but by thy Spirit. O my God, strengthen me effectually by his grace in the inner man for every purpose of spiritual life. Whatever he has engaged to do in thy children, let him do it in me, that through his presence and power Christ may dwell in my heart by faith. O let him continually discover to me mine interest in Christ, and open to me the exceeding riches of thy love in him. Holy Father, let thy good Spirit abide with me, that I may know for certain Christ is one with me, and I am one with him, and may thereby be able to maintain constant fellowship with him--he dwelling in me, and I in him. O may I thus live continually by the faith of the Son of God, depending always for acceptance with thee upon his atonement and his righteousness, and so may find the happy fruit of his prayer to thee,—" O righteous Father, I have declared to my disciples thy name,

"name, and will declare it, that the love,  
 "wherewith thou lovest me, may be in them,  
 "and I in them." Thou didst hear — thou hast  
 answered times out of number, the request of  
 thy beloved Son. Lord God, answer it to me.  
 Let me rejoice in thy love, and find it to be the  
 same to me as to him. Let thy good Spirit root  
 me and ground me in the knowledge of thy  
 love, to me in Jesus. O grant me to be deeply  
 rooted in the experience of it, that my faith,  
 working by love, may bring forth much fruit  
 to thy glory, and I may become so grounded  
 in love, as to stand unshaken, like a house  
 built upon a rock, against every attack made  
 upon my love to thee. O my God and  
 Father, my heart is naked and open to thee.  
 Thou knowest the secrets of it. Thou seest  
 how fervently I pray for the abiding  
 presence of the holy Spirit. My prayer  
 comes from a feeling sense of my want of  
 him, and from a dependence on thy promise  
 to give the Spirit to them that ask him. Lord,  
 I ask. Grant me to be strengthened by him  
 in the inner man. Send him to manifest  
 plainer and plainer my union with Jesus, in  
 order to my keeping up communion with  
 him: that having him dwelling in my heart  
 by faith, I may be so established in the expe-  
 rience of thy love to me in him, as to be  
 able to comprehend with all saints, what is  
 that breadth and length, and depth, and  
 height of thy love. All the saints compre-  
 hend

hend it. But the saints below less than they above. And some of them below comprehend more than others. I know but little : O my God, increase my knowledge of thy love in Jesus. Whereunto I have attained, establish me ; and keep me pressing forward for clearer discoveries of it. Help me to survey it, so far as faith is able, in its most glorious dimensions, and to praise thee for mine experience of its rich mercies. Holy Father, teach me still more by thy Spirit of the boundless freeness and of the endless fulness of thy love—let me know thy love in Christ, which passeth knowledge. Although I cannot know it, as it is, my limited understanding being incapable of measuring the infinity of thy love, yet for this very reason let me be daily studying to know more of it—growing up into Christ Jesus by faith—abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost—and increasing in the love of God. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, let me thus partake of the fulness of grace below, grace for grace, till I partake of the fulness of glory above—that I may be filled with all the fulness which is of God, with which thou hast promised to fill thy children in earth and heaven. O magnify thy love towards me according to its greatness, and not according to my deserts, or to my prayers. I know thou canst do exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask

or think, according to the power that worketh effectually in me. Thy power engaged to act for me is the support of my faith, and mine encouragement in my prayer. It is an infinite and almighty power, which has graciously begun, and has hitherto prosperously carried on the good work in my soul. To it all things are possible. Lord, forbid I should doubt of thy granting the petitions, which I have been offering up unto thee in thy Son's name. That which thou hast promised, thou art able also to perform. O my God and Father, set thy power to work more effectually in me. Let the Spirit of might enlarge my thoughts of, and my faith in, thy precious love. Let me experience daily, how much more thou art able to do, than I have yet obtained ; to give, than I have yet asked ; to increase, than I have yet thought. And whatever increase thou givest, may it draw out mine affections in greater love to thee, and to thy ways, and so be the means of bringing more glory to thee. For thy love in Jesus the whole family in heaven and earth is ascribing honour and praise. Accept my thanks, holy Father, together with theirs. To thee be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end. *Amen.*

## C. H. A. F. IV.

*The believer goes on successfully; while he walks by faith in a constant dependence upon his reconciled God, and loving Father.*

**T**HE leading principle upon which he sets out is this. God is my God, and Father. He is perfectly reconciled unto me; and my conscience is at peace with him through faith in his beloved Son. He loves me in him. He has manifested it plainly to me, and now my heart would cleave to him as my most tender parent. I would rest in my love to him as he rests in his love to me. It is entirely through the grace of the eternal Spirit, that I have been enabled thus to believe in the finished work of Jesus, and to experience the Father's love in him. By which means I have been satisfied of the love of the ever blessed Trinity to my soul. Father, Son and Spirit have covenanted to make me an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. From my belief and experience of these truths I have chosen God for my portion. His will is become mine. His appointed way is my course; and now I desire so to walk with him, as to maintain in my conscience the peace of God, and in my heart the love of God. I do not expect any new title to those inestimable graces.

graces. My claim is good and valid under Christ. I would not disparage it by supposing, that my close walk with God was to make any atonement for my sins, or to be the least part of my justifying righteousness. I have these already; and perfectly, too, in Jesus. The enjoyment of them is the thing I want. I am seeking for more of that peace with, and love to, the Father, to which I am entitled in his Son. His fulness, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, is mine. A free grant of it has passed in the court of heaven, has been revealed in the record of truth, and I by believing have accepted the grant. I am in possession of its privileges, and am enjoying its blessings. On the fulness of Jesus I live this day. Out of it I hope to be receiving every grace, which I shall want for my safe and happy walk with his Father, and my Father. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for what thou knowest and hast experienced of his abundant grace: which has enabled thee thus to resolve to walk with thy reconciled God, and loving Father. This day thou art called upon to maintain peace with him in thy conscience, and love to him in thy heart; peace like his, flowing from the sense of his being perfectly reconciled to thee— love like his, the happy fruit of his unchangeable love to thee. Whatever thou meetest with in thy work or warfare ought not to lessen, but ought to exercise and to improve those

those graces. <sup>b</sup> Never forget, that he is thy God—the God of peace. He stands related to thee in the dearest and most indissoluble bond of love. He is thy Father in Jesus. Keep the sense of this always fresh upon thy mind, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Nothing will be able to stop thee in the way to heaven, or to seduce thee out of it; but every thing will bring thee forward. Whilst thou canst maintain peace and love, thou wilt go on prosperously, against guilt and self righteousness, against the wiles and assaults of thy spiritual foes, against the world which lieth in wickedness, and against every inward and outward trial. The Lord being on thy side, all these shall work together under him for thy good, and they shall be the means of making thee walk safely in the way, and of bringing thee happily to the end of it. The apostle has given us the whole plan in few words—“ WE WALK says he, BY FAITH, and not by sight.” We direct our christian course by believing, and not by seeing. Faith is to us the evidence of things not seen, and the ground of our hoping to enjoy them. We believe upon the authority of God’s word, that they are what he describes them to be: for faith, as a grace of the Spirit, consists in giving credit to what God says. If it be a truth proposed to the understanding, faith relies upon the infallible word. If it be a promise, faith depends

pends upon the arm of God to make it good. And whatever he has promised, faith (when it is as it should be) does not stagger at difficulties, but rests fully persuaded, that what God hath promised, he is able also to perform. Faith looks at the word spoken, and overlooks seeming impossibilities; **THUS SAITH THE LORD**—that's enough for faith—full satisfying evidence: for it knows, that to speak and to do are the same thing with an unchangeable God.

How many errors in judgment, and consequent mistakes in practice prevail at this day, chiefly arising from confounding faith with its fruits; and from not distinguishing between the word of God believed, and what will follow upon believing it aright. Thus some make assurance to be of the essence of faith, others make appropriation, and many make it consist in an impression upon the mind, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. These are fruits: what faith should produce, but not what it is. These are effects of faith working, and not definitions of the nature of faith. A believer should be exhorted to make his calling and election sure: for it is his privilege. He ought to give all diligence to attain assurance, to appropriate Christ with all his blessings to himself, and to be clearly persuaded that Christ loved him and gave himself for him. These are blessed fruits of

believing. May God give his people more of them! But then the tree must be before the fruits, and the fruits grow upon the tree. Faith is the first, and faith derives its being from believing the word of God, and all its fruits are continued acts of believing. And when you hear of believing, do you not always think of something spoken? You cannot separate these two in your mind. Something has been said and proposed to you, before your belief can be called for. If nothing has been said, belief has no exercise. Faith and the word of God therefore are related as the effect and the cause: because faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. What God hath spoken in his word demands belief from all that hear it. When faith cometh by hearing it, then we assent to the truth of what God has said, and we rely upon his faithfulness to make good what he has promised. Assurance is this faith grown to its full stature: but we are not born six feet high. Appropriation is a very comfortable acting of faith, when a man is persuaded of his interest in covenant mercies: and from what he then feels can say, Christ loved me and gave himself for me; but he has not this comfort in times of heaviness, he may be walking in darkness and having no light, yea in the hidings of the Lord's countenance, and yet even then he may trust simply to what God hath

hath spoken ; which is true faith, and more exalted faith, than that which draws its evidence from its appropriating acts and its present experience. The more a man trusts to sense, the less he lives by faith : for sensible feelings are not faith. Impressions are not believing. I see the sun. I hear a sound. I feel an object : faith has no place in these instances. Its essence is believing and trusting what God hath spoken. If his word be believed, and by believing the conscience find peace, and the heart joy : These are joy and peace IN believing. They come from believing. Are its effects. And no more enter into the essence of faith, than comfortable feelings do into the essence of a man. He is as truly a man, when miserable, as he is when comfortable.

These mistakes should be carefully guarded against, because they are chiefly pernicious to the children of God ; who are kept by them from growing up into assurance, into appropriation, and into the sensible experience of God's love to them in Christ Jesus. They are puzzled—they are misled, by being told that they have no faith, if they have not assurance, &c. They examine themselves, but cannot find any such faith. This discourages them. They are tempted to think they have no true faith, because they have not what certain persons talk of. But if they would adhere strictly to the word of

God, and would take their ideas from it, they would see how simple and plain a thing believing is, and would soon be satisfied that they were true believers. Which conviction would have many blessed effects, especially these—it would put them upon seeking for an increase of faith, and upon expecting the proper fruits of faith. What nourishes faith, ripens them: for they cannot be produced so long as persons are doubting whether they have any faith at all. They would see how desirable it is to believe without doubt or wavering, what honour it puts upon God's word, what comfort it brings to them. And they would be waiting in the appointed means for grace to maintain, for grace to improve their faith, that they may be going on from faith to faith. While this was their end and aim, faith in act and exercise, maintained and improved, would bring in daily growing evidence of their being indeed partakers of the faith of God's elect. Living by faith, walking by faith, would demonstrate to them their spiritual life and walk, as plainly as natural life and walk can be demonstrated by any outward actions.

Here is great need, O my soul, to read the scripture, and to pray for the Spirit of wisdom. Read, pray much; lest thou shouldst err concerning the faith. Every error will be a stumbling block in the way of

of thy holy walk, and make thee tired of it, or seduce thee out of it. Let it be one of thy daily petitions, Lord, save me from all mistakes concerning the faith of the gospel ; and let the word of God, by which faith cometh and groweth, be thy daily study. This is thy present business. Now set out, trusting to what God hath spoken, and relying on what he hath promised. On this principle proceed, as it is laid down by the apostle, *Col. ii. 6.* “ As ye have therefore “ received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye “ in him.” He is expressing his joy at his beholding their order, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ, and he would teach them how to maintain their faith throughout their christian course. How did you receive Christ at first ? Was it not by believing ? Receiving Christ and believing in him are in *John i. 12.* supposed to mean the same thing. And in *John xvii. 20, 21.* Our Lord says, that they who believe in him through the word are one with him. Christ then is received by faith, and by the same faith, by the belief of the same word of God, we walk in him, so as to be rooted and grounded and established in the faith. Our walk is in him, not any thing distinct from him ; but is the effect of union with him. By him we live, in him we walk—rooted in him, we grow as a branch in the vine,—built up in him, we are fixed as a

building on a sure foundation, and thereby we become established and strengthened in the faith. Every step we take is by faith, by the same faith, wherewith Christ was received. He must be received always, as he was received once. There is no change of object, and there must be no change of faith, but the same continued trust on his word, and the same dependance on his promised strength. We never set out to walk with a reconciled God till we are one with Christ by faith, and know our union with him, and our walk is in consequence of this. If we go on at all it is by communion with him. We can receive only out of his fulness grace for grace, to make us willing and able to go forward. Our fellowship with him is in every part and in every moment of our walk, and this is as necessary as our fellowship with the air and elements of this world is to every thing that concerns our natural walk. Our wisdom to guide our steps, our progress in the way, our courage and strength, our warfare and victory, every grace and every blessing is received by faith, and is the effect of our communion with Jehovah Jesus. We trust in his word, we rely on his arm, we wait on his faithfulness, and so go forward: for he makes good what he had promised to give us in our walk, which confirms the peace of God, establishes our hearts in the love of God, increases our faith,

faith, and thereby makes our daily walk more comfortable to us and more glorious to him.

But if faith consists in believing and trusting the word of God, it may be enquired, how shall we know the difference between true and false, between dead and living faith. It may be known from the cause. The fruit of the Spirit is faith. He produces it. It is his gift, bestowed by his operation, continued by his power, increased by his blessing, and carried on, to the end by his never leaving nor forsaking his own work. And he makes it known to be his. He gives eyes to see it, and hearts to acknowledge it. Therefore the apostle says of them who have received the Spirit of God, that they **KNOW** the things which are freely given to them of God; by faith they both know the reality, and also taste the sweetness of those free gifts of free grace.

It may be known from the effects. Dead faith brings forth nothing. Living faith is fruitful. It produces a hearty trust in the truth of what God hath spoken, and a quiet reliance on the faithfulness of what God hath promised. It gives him credit for the finished salvation of his Son, and puts honour upon his record concerning it; whereby peace is received into the conscience, and love into the heart. Upon which there follows a settled dependence upon this recon-

ciled God, and loving Father for the fulfilling of every promise, and this is improved by daily experience. He that trusteth in the Lord is never confounded. God is faithful. His promises cannot fail. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. The Lord God will be a sun and shield unto him: the Lord will give him grace and glory.

As for the hypocrites, it is not so with them. The holy Spirit was not the author of their fajth. It was a fancy of their own, formed in their heads without any warrant from God. There was no life in it, and no living effects from it. There was the form, and nothing more. They made a profession, but never came to any enjoyment. They had no vital union, and therefore they could not have any real communion with Christ. They could not, as the apostle expresses it, walk in him, and therefore in the hour of temptation they fell away, and came to nothing. Take heed then, O my soul, of mistakes. Examine carefully of what sort thy faith is. Bring it to the standard of scripture; and see what went before believing—see whether thou dost now from thy heart believe what God hath spoken—wait for the effects. Dost thou so trust his word, as to take him for thy God and thy portion? Art thou walking with him? And art thou depending on him to bestow the promised graces and blessings on thee in thy walk?

walk ? If this be thine experience ; thou art set out well ; go on. Remember where every thing relating to thy walk is to be had. The Father's love has laid it all up in the Son's fulness, and it is the office of the holy Spirit to teach thee how to receive out of it grace for grace. He teaches by his word. With this in thy hand, and his light in thine understanding, read and study what he has promised thee for thy safe, happy, and holy walk. Take no step without the direction of his word, and expect at every step, that he will make good to thee what he has promised. Thou wilt very soon find the necessity of this dependence upon him : for ere thou hast well begun thy walk, thou wilt be called upon to exercise thy faith and to put it to trial. Thou wilt meet with many things in thee averse to this holy walk ; and many more to distress thee in it. The body of sin, the old man, the flesh, with its affections and lusts are still in thee. It is of their nature to be lusting, and to be always putting forth some of their filthy motions, in order to draw thee to walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit. The tempter helps them all he can. He knows how to improve them to his own interest : and if from what is passing within thee, there be a sight and sense of sin, then if he can get thee to look at it in his view, he will act upon thy legal and self-

self-righteous tempers, and will inject such vile insinuations as these against the Lord and against his Christ.—

How is it that I am yet the subject of sin? It is still in me. It cleaves to me, as the flesh to my bones, and it mixes so with my duties, that I cannot perform them without it. I sometimes fear I am nothing but sin. When I attempt to walk with God, ere I set out, something evil arises within me, and stops me. Some proud unbelieving thought, some sensual affection, some worldly disposition, some corruption or other is ever at hand to hinder my course. What then must I think of myself? I scarce know what. Things I see, do not grow better. I have been long hoping for it; but I find there still dwelleth no good thing in me: so that I am almost ready to question the truth of my grace, and it is with great difficulty I can keep up any peace in my conscience.

When the believer is attacked in this manner, (and who is not at some time or other) how is he to defend himself? Will his skilfulness in the word of righteousness, and his faith in the word of reconciliation keep him safe in the hour of temptation? Yes. By the grace of the holy Spirit the lessons before learnt will be enforced, and brought into use. This is the time to maintain faith in the atonement, and in the righteousness of the God-man. Now it is to be tried in the

the fire ; and it is put to the trial, that it may come out of it, like gold, proved to be sterling metal, and refined from its dross—better in every respect for having gone through the fire. The trial of faith is far more precious than that of gold which perisheth. It is therefore put into the furnace, that the believer may know the truth of it, and may experience the blessings of it. Faith conflicting with unbelief is a good fight—sometimes sharp ; but always profitable. The flesh may be weak and ready to yield, faith may be hard put to it, but victory is certain. During the battle the warrior is invincible in the whole armour of God. He takes to him the shield of faith, and holds it up against the fiery darts of satan. He draws out the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and with it he defeats satan. He consults or remembers a scripture suitable to his present case, and this being set home by the holy Spirit puts an end to the engagement, and restores and settles sweet peace in the conscience. How often has he applied the following passage, which the Lord speaks concerning his true Israelites, *Jer. xxxiii. 38, 39, 40, 41.* “ They SHALL “ be my people, and I WILL be their God, “ and I will give them one heart, and one “ way, that they may fear me FOR EVER, for “ the good of them, and of their children “ after them, and I will make an everlasting “ cove-

“ covenant for them, that I will not turn  
 “ away from them to do them good ; but I  
 “ will put my fear into their hearts that they  
 “ shall not depart from me ; yea, I will re-  
 “ joice over them to do them good.”

What strong consolation is there in this scripture ? Every sentence has an argument in it, tending to establish peace with God, and to maintain it in the midst of war. How quieting and satisfying to the troubled conscience is his covenant purpose ? “ They  
 “ **SHALL** be my people, and I **WILL** be their  
 “ God.” They shall, because I will. My will shall make them willing. And in the day of my power, when my purpose takes place, I will give them one heart, turned to myself, and one way, to walk with me by faith, as obedient children with their loving Father. This I will do for them that they may fear me **FOR EVER**, that the fear of offending me may rule always and by all means in their hearts.

O what promises are these ! What can weak faith require farther to silence its doubts ? How great is the goodness of God to his children, who knowing their frame, and whereof they are made, for the good of them, and of their children after them, has laid such a foundation for their faith, that they may build on it and not be afraid, yea standing on it they may fight the good fight of faith, assured of victory.

I will

I will make, says their God, an everlasting covenant for them, a covenant ordered in all things, and sure, by the counsel and oath of the blessed Trinity, the two immutable things, in which it is impossible God should lie: the mountains shall depart and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from them, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on them. My covenant was made for them, and shall be made good to them. As I live, saith the Lord, I will not turn away from them to do them good. I will never change my purpose, nor alter the word that is gone out of my mouth. I mean nothing but good to them. My heart is fixed upon it. And I will not leave the event to them. They shall not have the management of my purposes, nor have any power to defeat them: My will to do them good shall not depend on their will, or on their faithfulness, or on any thing in themselves. I have taken all their concerns into mine own hands, and I will conduct them all to the praise of the glory of mine own grace. I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me—they SHALL not depart from me. They are not the cause of their not departing, but I am. I have taken it upon myself. I will give them grace to walk close with me, and to fear me always. I have covenanted

nanted for all, the means as well as the end, and I will keep them by my almighty power, till they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. "Yea, I will "rejoice over them to do them good." This confirms all the rest. His purpose of doing them good, his executing it, his continuing it, his increasing it through time and through eternity, is a matter of rejoicing to the Lord God. He delights in it. It always was, and always will be the joy of his heart, his crown and glory. He will not, he cannot be deprived of his joy. Consider this, thou poor distressed soul, who art in heaviness through manifold temptations, and ready to faint through the weakness of thy faith. Take courage. Thy salvation is safe. Thy Father, who is in heaven rejoices in it: he will save: he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing. And his joy too shall be thine. As sure as God is in Zion, thou shalt return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon thy head, thou shalt obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away for ever.

O what a discovery is here of the ever loving heart of our heavenly Father! What more could he promise in order to put an end to all strife in the consciences of his afflicted children! He has engaged in a covenant of peace to do good, nothing but good to them. He has undertaken the whole of the

the covenant—what was to be done in them, as well as for them—to work out, to apply, and to secure their salvation. It is his unchangeable purpose, not to depart from them, and not to suffer them to depart from him, but he will rejoice in doing them good, and that for ever. This scripture, when understood and applied by the holy Spirit is received as full evidence of the unchangeable love of God to his children, and then it quiets their troubled minds. They can believe God to be their God still in an unchangeable covenant, and they become satisfied that he has made them, and will keep them his people for ever. When they can thus mix faith with the promise, it then becomes the means of their resting on the faithful arm of God in the hour of temptation, and of their finding him still a God of peace : whereby peace is established in their consciences, and multiplied in their hearts. They learn to put more trust in him, as their perfectly reconciled Father, and to approach him with more holy filial confidence. The trial of their faith, sharp as it was, yet has done them great good. It has proved their peace, and has confirmed it. They now know well that it is the peace of God ; and they have been taught how to maintain it. War makes good soldiers. The trials of their grace are for the improvement of grace. Their peace has been therefore shaken,

shaken, like a new planted tree, that it may take deeper and faster root. Being thus strengthened in the faith, and having the peace of God ruling in their hearts, they can meditate upon this scripture, and turn it into a subject of prayer and praise—

O gracious God and Father, pardon my thoughts of thy love to me in Jesus. I was tempted, and ready to give way to unbelief: but the gracious provision made in thy word was the means of keeping me in the hour of temptation. O my God, make the word, in which thou hast caused me to put my trust, more precious to my soul. Open still more to me the fulness of it, and put me into happier possession of its promised blessings. I praise thee, I worship thee for revealing this promise by thy Spirit, and for applying it by his grace with comfort to my heart. I now set to my seal, that it is true. It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. Glory be to thee that I accept it, and enjoy the good promised in it. O Father of mercies, what am I that I should be made one of thy people, and should have thee for my God? This love passeth knowledge. O help me to understand more, give me to find more of thy covenant love. Make my heart one with thee. Lead me in thy one way, that I may fear thee for ever. And when temptations come, such as I have been in, grant they may bring me nearer to thee,

thee, and may be the means of my making much use of what thou hast provided for me in thy Son's fulness. O let thy good Spirit abide with me to establish my faith in thine everlasting covenant, that I may believe thou wilt never turn from me to do me good. Merciful God, grant me this grace in every hour of need. Thou hast given me thy word for it, and therein thou hast enabled me to put my trust. On thy faithful promise I depend, and on nothing in myself. Thou hast shewed me something of my heart, and I feel it is revolting and ready always to rebel against God; but thou hast undertaken to put thy fear into it, that it shall not depart from thee: therefore into thy faithful hands I commit it. Keep me, my God, by thy mighty power through faith unto salvation. *Amen, Amen.*

Happy trials! which have so good an issue, and bring forth such peaceable fruits. My brethren, account it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations, if they lead to the exercise of grace, and occasion fervent effectual prayer. The believer, thus tried, learns by practice the necessity of being at peace with God, and of maintaining it in order to walk with God. He is put upon studying the nature of this peace. He reads and meditates upon the revealed account of it. He sees it is a perfect unchangeable peace, secured to him by the everlasting covenant of the blessed

blessed Trinity, who have engaged to save him from all his sins and miseries, and never to turn away from doing him good. To this he trusts. He commits himself to the care of this covenant God ; and he finds the promise true. In temptation he believes, and is delivered. In his warfare out of weakness he is made strong. He fights the good fight of faith, and he conquers all his enemies. He learns from trials to trust with more confidence. He not only maintains, but also improves peace with God. He depends on what God has promised to them, who walk with him, and the promise is made good, and he learns to go on more comfortably, and daily walks closer with his heavenly Father.

The enemy looks on him with malice. He envies his state. He once knew the heaven of communion with God, but he was lifted up with pride, and fell. It stirs up every infernal temper in him to see the happy believer, who had fallen like him, restored to what he can never expect. Hence either as a fly serpent, or as a roaring lion, he never ceases to tempt. As soon as one wile fails, he has another ready. He is night and day plotting and scheming, waiting for an opportunity to make a seasonable attack. While conscience is at peace with God, and lives under the protection of the blood of sprinkling, he tempts in

in vain. But he does not despair of success. He knows he has an ally within us in fast league with sin, and therefore he still hopes to draw him into sin by surprize or assault. In which he is indefatigable. He is never tired. He is always tempting the believer, not so much to gross offences, as to spiritual wickedness. Sly injections, legal insinuations, and self-righteous thoughts, are his most common temptations. With these he tries to shake the peace of conscience, and he forms his attack generally in this manner.

How can you be a child of God, and yet be, as you are? There is nothing in you, for which God should look upon you, and love you. What have you? What ceasing from evil, what learning to do well, to recommend you to him? How can God love any thing, unless it be agreeable to his will, and what can he delight in unless it be conformable to his image? But do you live up to his will, and is his image perfectly renewed in you? Have you grace, and do you live up to it? Are you a christian, and are you like Christ? How are your duties? Just as they should be? You know they are not, and how can God be pleased with them, when you are not pleased with them yourself? How is your walk? Is it such as becometh your high calling—close with God, and at a vast distance from sin, and the world?

world? How is your warfare? Is the whole armour of God kept buckled on? And are you always in the strength of the Lord a conqueror? Examine, and try yourself. Bring forth that one good thing, for which God should love you, and bestow his blessing upon you. You have no such thing. You have nothing to merit, yea, nothing to recommend you to the divine favour: and therefore is it not great presumption to fancy, that God will love such a one as you, whose just desert is wrath and everlasting destruction?

These are some of the depths of satan. He knows how strongly we are by nature attached to the covenant of works, and that if he can get the believer to look off from Jesus, expecting to see something in himself, for which God should love him, he shall then weaken his faith and shake his peace. In this snare he has catched many a child of God. The temptation is suitable to the workings of our legal minds: it flatters our self-righteous hopes: and is vastly pleasing to the pride of our carnal hearts. No wonder then, so long as there is flesh in us as well as spirit, this artful suggestion should be sometimes received in this manner—Have I any thing for which God should esteem me and bless me! I wish I could discover some amiable temper, or some praise-worthy deed, which might recommend me to the particular regard of God. Indeed at present I have not

not any such. But I hope to attain it some time or other. If I do but use more diligence, and watchfulness, and wait more constantly in the means of grace, perhaps I may attain it soon. However there can be no harm in trying. I will exert myself. And I hope the day will come, when I shall be some way deserving of the divine favour.

Here the temptation has taken place. As the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so is this man's mind corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The subtle serpent has attacked the liberty of the child of God, and darkened his understanding, and obscured his view of gospel grace. His eye is not now single : His heart is not now simple, in the finished salvation. He has been deceived into a legal dependance, and is giving way to a spirit of bondage. If he was left to himself, the enemy would lead him captive at his will. Satan desires to have him, that he may sift him as wheat, but he is not suffered to blow any thing away, except a little chaff: for the holy Spirit, in whose keeping he is, discovers and defeats the attempts of satan. He brings to his mind, and enables him to make use of what he before knew of the doctrines of grace. The present trial requires the practice, and affords occasion for the improvement of his former lessons. He had learnt from scripture, truths very different from the

the suggestions, to which he was ready to yield. He was therein taught, that the Father's love to his children does not suppose merit in them. Grace does not follow works: for then grace would be no more grace. Election is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy. For we are saved freely by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. The election of grace is from mere love and sovereign favour, and has no motives to influence it but the good pleasure of the divine will. The objects of it are not the worthy, but the unworthy—not innocent, but fallen man—sinners, as such, no way conditioned or qualified—the lost, the helpless, the ungodly—yea the chief of sinners—open enemies and rebels against God. They are not saved by works of righteousness, which they have done, or can do, lest any of them should boast: For boasting is absolutely excluded. Salvation was so contrived, was so wrought out, and is so applied, that he who glorieth shall have nothing left him to glory in, but the Lord. No flesh can glory in his presence: for of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

So soon as the Spirit of God opens this view of the exceeding riches of divine grace, the believer sees his mistake: He finds that he was departing from the simplicity of the gospel,

gospel, by supposing that the love of God followed merit, and that he should be loved more according as his walk recommended him. His eyes are opened. The delusion vanishes. The perfect freeness, and the absolute sovereignty of the Father's love as revealed in scripture, is manifested to him. He reads, and mixes faith with what he reads, and so recovers himself out of the snare of the devil. Some such passage as this is made the means of his deliverance, *Ps. ciii.*

17. "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him." Precious words! full of rich consolation to those, who have been tempted to seek some qualification in themselves, on account of which they might be entitled to the love of God, and who have been distressed upon their not finding it. The holy Spirit teaches such persons to look out of themselves, to an object exactly suitable to their case. He directs them to the divine mercy—a never failing spring of comfort—to that mercy which reacheth from eternity to eternity—and which confers its richest favours, not for the worthiness of the receiver, but to the praise of the grace of the giver. Here he would have them fix their eyes, and expect relief to their hearts. Out of the fulness of mercy they may always receive grace for grace; for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that

that fear him. Every word is weighty. Meditate upon it, O my soul, and may the consideration of each lead thee to exalt that mercy of God, which is over all his works.

JEHOVAH is the word here rendered Lord. It is the incommunicable name, expressive of the incommunicable nature of the Godhead. It signifies the peculiar manner of the divine existence, which is in, and of itself, underived, and independant. O how happy is it for thee, that there is mercy in the self-existent Godhead, and that every perfection in it will be for ever exalted, even justice itself, for the exercise of mercy. May the holy Spirit teach thee more of its nature, and make thee daily more acquainted in thine experience with its free grace and free gifts.

MERCY is that perfection in Jehovah, which disposes him to save miserable sinners: not a blind mercy, such as infidels dream of—but consistent with the honour of his law, and exercised to the glory of its holy precepts and of its just sanctions: therefore mercy and truth are so often mentioned together in scripture. God will not shew any mercy to sinners, but such as tends to establish his truth. Not one of his words can be broken, nor can one titile of them ever fail. He will be justified in all his sayings, and clear when he is judged. He will be true and just, whenever he is merciful: his mercies being all

all covenant-mercies, and all given in, and through Christ Jesus. All men are by nature children of wrath, and only they, who are chosen and called in Christ Jesus, are saved from wrath. These are vessels of mercy. His mercy is to them the love of a tender parent to his miserable children. He pities them, and determines to save them from their sins, in due time he quickens them, gives them eyes to see, and hearts to believe his love to them in Jesus, as the apostle witnesses—  
 “ God who is rich in mercy, for his great  
 “ love wherewith he loved us, even when  
 “ we were dead in sins, hath quickened us  
 “ together with Christ.”

But for what reason, and upon what account is he merciful to them? His mercy has no motive, but his own will. The objects of his mercy are corrupt fallen creatures, deserving his wrath, even as others; and therefore he does not deal with them upon the footing of desert. If he shewed them mercy for any foreseen works of theirs, because he knew they would repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it, mercy would then be turned into justice, and would lose both its name and its nature. Whereas he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. It is from mine own freedom and sovereignty, that I have mercy on any sinners. The

cause is in myself, and not in them. I have compassion on whom I will. It is from mine own mere love, that I have determined to be gracious to them ; and my love has determined to save them, and the way also in which I will save them. I have appointed the end, and the means at the same time. Of mine own motion and good will I have resolved to give my Son for them, and my Spirit to them, that they may repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it, and so I may bring them through my tender mercies to eternal salvation. If this was not the case, how could the description be true, that mercy is **FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING**. The mercy of God knows no variableness, nor shadow of turning. It is always the same. His fatherly heart ever entertained thoughts of mercy towards them : for when he shews them mercy, it is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus—not for their merits, but for his mercies sake—not for what they have any claim to, but for his own name sake. He gives all from mercy, and he would have all the glory returned to the mercy of the giver. What he gives, that he continues, and according to covenant engagements. Covenant mercies are sure mercies. “ I will make an everlasting covenant for you, says he, even the sure mercies of the beloved”. They have already

ready been made sure to him. He is now in full possession of every promised mercy. And he has received them, not as a private person, but as the head of the body, the church. He keeps them for the use of his church-members. And as sure as the crown is upon his head, so surely will it be upon every one of their heads : for they are in the same covenant with him, whose sure mercies reach from eternity to eternity. O what a view is here open to the eye of faith! Mercy always purposing, and in due time bestowing its free blessings upon sinners—mercy without beginning, and without ending. The holy Spirit often calls upon us to behold it in this light : for he has not celebrated any of its divine properties, so much as this. It is frequently the noble subject of thanksgiving in the psalmist's hymns. He has dedicated the cxxxvi. entirely to the praise of mercy, and going through the works of nature, providence, and grace, ascribes them one by one to that mercy, which endureth for ever. O happy, thrice happy objects of it! What was in the heart of the Father of mercies towards you from everlasting will be so to everlasting. His sure mercies are yours. His compassions towards you fail not. Whatever you want for your successful walk, he has promised to give you. Be not discouraged then. He will supply all your wants, not for your sakes, but for his mercies sake. Are

you sensible of your unwertiness? That's well. Mercy is for such. It can have no glory, but from such as you. Trust it, and be assured you will find, that it endureth for ever and ever.

If a doubt should arise in your mind—it is true, mercy in God cannot fail; but the exercise of it towards me may fail: I may so walk as to deprive myself of all claim and title to it. The psalmist has given a direct answer to this ill-grounded suspicion. He says, the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

UPON THEM THAT FEAR HIM. This is their character: they fear their God. Once there was no fear of God before their eyes; but now they know him to be their Father. The Spirit of adoption has given them joy and peace in believing it. Hence a holy filial fear rules in their hearts, and influences their walk. While it operates thus; and as obedient children, they fear to offend their loving Father; and desire to please him in all things, how can his mercy towards them fail?

But may they not cease to fear him, and then he will cease to be merciful to them? No, blessed be God. He has made ample provision in this case. "I will put my fear," says he, into their hearts, and they SHALL "NOT depart from me." This fear is one of the fruits of the Spirit, which he produces in

in all the children of God. And they have it from him as a covenant blessing, which is full security for its continuance. It is one of the graces provided for them in Jesus by the Father's immutable love. "I will give them, " says he, one heart and one way, that they "may fear me FOR EVER!" The holy Spirit is the guardian of this never failing fear. It is his office to put it, and then to keep it in their hearts. He has the whole charge of it, and therefore he has promised to abide with them for ever, that they may fear the Lord all the days of their lives.

How exactly suited is this scripture to the case of the tempted christian! What a full provision is there made in it for his safety and peace! God has mercy for him and plenteous redemption—mercy reaching from everlasting to everlasting—always kind to the miserable. Mercy and misery are related as sin and salvation. There is not any thing, which a sinner can want, but mercy has a supply for him—a promised, a covenant, a never failing supply. It is a Father's mercy, which will never leave his children, and the same mercy will not suffer them to leave him. His mind is fixed upon shewing them mercy for ever and ever; and therefore he gives them his Spirit to abide with them and to dwell in them. He abides with them, and they live: he dwells in them, and they walk in the fear of God. And by

the supply of the Spirit they go on, till they finish their course with joy.

By meditating upon this scripture the believer is set at liberty. Though his faith staggered a little, yet the trial of it has done him good. He has learned a useful lesson, and gained much experience by it. His reflections upon what has passed in his mind are such as these—

O how foolish was I to forget the atonement and righteousness of my dearest Immanuel, in whom alone I have pardon and acceptance! How base was I, and ungrateful! I was tempted to expect that in myself, which I can have only in him. Vile legal creature that I am, I abhor myself for being so ill to my best friend. What good can I have, but what I first receive from him? I agree with the apostle, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. I am a very sink of sin, and of all uncleanness. I deserve mercy no more than the devil does. And yet I was looking out for some good quality in myself, on account of which God might be merciful to me. Whereas I am now satisfied he has no mercy, but in Jesus. All his mercies are covenant mercies; given from mere grace, and given to miserable sinners—not to make them self-admirers, but to humble them—not to lead them to think that they can bring God in debt to them for his own gifts, or for the right use  
of

of them, which is a fresh gift—but he gives all to the praise of the glory of his grace. He delighteth in mercy; and my case required mercy. It was such as his mercy could get all the honour of relieving. Therefore I ought in the hour of temptation to have trusted in his mercy, to have hoped in his mercy in time of trouble, and to have loved him for his mercy in time of misery. Here should my faith have directed its eye, and not to any good which I have done, or can do. I should have remembered, how it was with the election of grace, and with the vessels of mercy. God has one way of dealing with them all. Not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to his mercy he saveth them, freely, fully, eternally. All is from his own good will, from first to last. Every motive, which inclines him to do good to any sinner, is not excited by what the sinner does or is, but arises from himself. And when he bestows any good, it never is deserved, but is entirely an act of sovereign grace, flowing from the Father's love, out of the Son's fulness, by the influence of the holy Spirit; and is given and continued to magnify and exalt the mercy of the eternal Three. O how did I dishonour the divine perfections by giving way to legal hopes, and by supposing that the divine will would be governed by my more or less deservings? Where

should I be, if I had my deservings ? God forgive me. I see mine error. I am humbled for it, and I repent with shame and sorrow. I hope my past misconduct will prove a blessing to me : For it has certainly taught me to trust less to myself, and more to the word of God ; to depend less upon my own doings, and more upon free grace promises. To the word, which cannot be broken, I would trust in time of need. Whoever trusts in it shall never be confounded. This I know to be true by happy experience. I will therefore read, and hear, and study it night and day. By means of it the Lord wrought a great deliverance for me. My feet were almost gone, my treadings had well nigh slipt ; but he sent out his word and saved me. I read and believed, that the Father was not reconciled to me for the goodness of my walk, but that reconciliation was planned in the great covenant before all worlds, and was carried into execution by the life and death of Immanuel ; it was his peculiar, his glorious, his incommunicable work ; it was his sole prerogative to make peace by the blood of his cross. O that I may be enabled to maintain it the next time my faith is tried, and to put honour and glory upon the divine record concerning it. I read and believed, that the Father does not love me upon account of my walk, but for his mercies sake. His mercy was towards me from everlasting.

everlasting. He loved me in his Son—chose me—accepted me in the beloved—and all his dealings with me, since he called me by his grace, have come from the tender mercies of a covenant God and Father. I would not henceforth have one doubt of his being reconciled to me, and of his loving me perfectly in Jesus. My faith herein has been confirmed, by my late trials. I have learned by experience to rely upon what God has spoken, for preserving his peace in my conscience, and his love in my heart. Depending on his faithful word, and mighty arm, I would walk with him this day for the strengthening and increasing of those graces. This is the desire and prayer of my soul.

O Father of mercies, hear me for Jesus' sake. I acknowledge my sinfulness and unworthiness, even in my closest walk with thee. I am less than the least of thy mercies: yea, deserving the heaviest of thy vengeance. It is of the Lord's mercy, that it has not fallen upon me long ago, and I trust in his word, that it will never fall upon me. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage? Thou retainest not thine anger against them for ever: because thou delightest in mercy. Glory be to thee for thine unspeakable mercies; for thou hast given me faith in the atonement of Jesus, by whom

whom I have peace with thee my reconciled God, and by whom I have experienced thy great love to me. On thee, O my God, is still my hope. I look up to thee the giver of those graces for strength to maintain them in my daily walk. I do believe in the sacrifice and righteousness of Immanuel, Lord help mine unbelief. I find it hard to preserve in my practice, what I believe to be true in doctrine: And therefore on thy present help I must continually depend. Lord strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man against temptations. I am daily and hourly called upon to exercise my faith, and when thy grace does not hold me up, I fall. The fiery darts of satan easily inflame me, when they are thrown at my legal hopes, false dependencies, or self-righteous tempers. My shield which should quench them, is ready to drop out of mine hand. I should fall a prey to the enemy, and the fire would consume me, if thy mercy was not over me for good. O my God and Father, strengthen my faith against the wiles and assaults of satan, and against the workings of mine own unbelief. When these trials come, keep me sensible of my weakness, and dependent on thy promised strength, that I may meet them strong in the Lord, and in the power of thy might. O let every trial teach me more of thy peace in my conscience, and more of thy love in my

my heart, that I may keep on in a steady course, walking humbly with my God. This is the work of thy good Spirit. I cannot preserve, nor improve his graces, unless he be every moment present with me. He is the giver, the continuer, the increaser of them all. O God the holy Ghost, I therefore beseech thee to water thy graces every moment. Lest any hurt them, keep them night and day. Never leave me, nor forsake me, but what thou hast graciously begun, that mightily carry on, in my soul. Temptations are strong, and I am weak; stand by me in the hour of need: And if my faith be tried with fiery temptations, let it come out of them, like gold out of the fire. O thou almighty Spirit, confirm by trials, improve by experience, my trust in thy promised help. Let me go on from faith to faith. Keep up the confidence of my rejoicing in my reconciled God and loving Father, that I may walk humbly with him in sweet communion, and holy fellowship in the way everlasting. Grant me these mercies, gracious Father, for thy dear Son's sake, by the influence of the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, to whom be equal praise for ever and ever. Amen..

## C H A P. V.

*The believer orders his steps according to the word, walking with a free heart in the king's high-way of obedience.*

**M**EDITATE, O my soul, upon the wonders, which divine love hath wrought for thee and for thy salvation. Review the many, many mercies of thy past life; and consider, that thou art called upon to walk this day with THY God. What a privilege is this! He is thy God, and thou art his adopted Son. O what an high honour has he conferred upon thee! He has taken thee into the most noble family, yea, into the divine household of faith. He has permitted thee to walk with him, as thy Father. He has appointed the way, promised to be with thee in it, and every moment and at every step to be doing thee good. There can be no happiness superior to this on earth. Prize it: For it is inestimable. Enjoy it: For it is heaven begun. Walking with God by faith is present enjoyment of him, and will infallibly bring thee to the end of thy journey, to full and everlasting enjoyment.

Hold

Hold fast then the confidence of thy rejoicing. What thou hast been taught by the holy Spirit, depend upon him for confirming and establishing. He has enabled thee to see the glory of the finished salvation of Jesus, and to believe the divine record concerning it. Thou hast renounced every thing for the pardon of thy sins, but the blood-shedding of the lamb, and every thing for acceptance, but the Lord our righteousness. Thy faith herein has been tried, and the trial ended well. Thy temptations were manifold and violent, but they have done thee good. They have shewed thee, the necessity of depending upon the perfect work of the God-man—of rejoicing wholly in Christ Jesus, and of having no confidence in the flesh. They have also been the means of convincing thee, that thou standest by faith. Be not high minded then, but fear. And let thy fear of thyself lead thee to trust more in God. Rely on his faithful arm to maintain and to carry on his own work in thy soul. Remember, he has promised it. Thy sufficiency is of God, and he has engaged to give thee grace sufficient for thee. He has undertaken, as a Father, to supply all thy wants, to deliver thee from all miseries, and to withhold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Thy salvation is safe. It rests upon a sure foundation, as sure as the covenant of the day, and the covenant

covenant of the night. These succeed each other by the will of their creator, and have not been out of course one single moment. The ordinances of day and night are regular and certain. So certain is thy salvation by the same unerring will. While the belief of this rules in thy conscience, and in thy heart, thou wilt be able to resist temptations. None of them will overcome thee, unless they separate between thee and thy God. Nay they will work for thy good, if guilty fears do not wrest the shield of faith out of thine hand. O beg of God to keep thee and thy faith in the hour of trial, that thou mayest experience his faithfulness to his word. If thou put honour upon it, according to thy faith so shall it be done unto thee. Give it credit, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Thou wilt walk in love this day, as God hath loved thee. He will be thy portion, and the way in which he is to be enjoyed will be thy delight.

Set out then in this faith, with peace in thy conscience, and love in thy heart—trusting to thy God and Father. Look up to him for strength to maintain and to increase these graces. And hope to receive it from his faithfulness. Now he has put a new song in thy mouth, even praise unto thy God, go on thy way believing and rejoicing. Jesus is thine with all his fulness. And he has promised thee a constant supply of the Spirit,

Spirit, that thou mayest have grace for grace to enable thee to walk humbly with thy God.

Mind then, thy walk is to be ordered according to his revealed will, and in his appointed way of obedience to it : For all rational creatures are bound to obey God. As soon as he makes known his will to them, it become their indispensable duty. His will is one, like himself, unchangeably the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever : For when revealed by the sovereign creator it becomes to mankind a law, which altereth not. It binds angels and men every moment, in every point and circumstance. And its obligation will never cease. For all his commandments are sure, they stand fast for ever and ever. What he has commanded is as fixed as the sun before him. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.

It pleased the sovereign creator to inforce this holy, just and good law by proper sanctions. Out of his mere grace he promised life to obedience, which man engaged to perform : And he threatened death to disobedience, to which penalty man submitted. Thereby this law became a covenant of works. The promise was to him, who should continue obedient in all things : For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who fulfilleth those things

things shall live by them. But if he does not fulfil them perfectly, without one failing, he then comes under the penalty, which God had threatened to disobedience—“Cursed is he who continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law to do them:” This curse draws after it all the pains and penalties of the broken law in earth and in hell.

Under this law of works Adam was placed, and under it all his descendants are born. He and they are bound to keep the law in their own persons, if they would receive the promise, or liable to suffer the penalty, if they transgress. Adam broke the law of works, and we all in him: For in him all have sinned. We were all in his loins, when he fell, and forfeited in his attainder. By the offence of that one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. The righteous judge passed the sentence, and decreed, that by the law of works no flesh living should be saved: For he has proved both Jews and Gentiles to be under the law, and under sin, which is the transgression of it. Whereby every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God: Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

In the law of works there was no provision made for a surety; but it did not absolutely exclude one: Therefore it left room for

for the covenant of grace, in which a provision was made in the person of Jesus Christ for securing the divine honour of this holy law. He undertook to stand up in man's place and stead, to magnify the precepts of the law in his life, and to glorify the penalties of the law in his death, that not one jot or tittle of it might fail till all was fulfilled. And as he was God over all, blessed for ever, his life and death put everlasting honour upon the divine law. His obedience was of inestimable value, and his sufferings were infinitely sufficient to take away sin. Christ is now the end of the law for righteousness. He answered the end of the law for his people by obeying and suffering for them; And every one of them can now plead by faith a perfect fulfilling of all the precepts, a perfect suffering of all the penalties in the person of their divine surety. God the Father is faithful and just to his word and engagements with his son: He has made known his will in the immutable record of his grace, " that whosoever believeth in Jesus should not perish, but should have everlasting life." How can he perish? Jesus died for him. He shall live with God in everlasting life: Because Jesus lived for him. And this is the declared will of the Father concerning all that believe in his only begotten Son.

Remember



Ramember then, O my soul, that thou art not under the law, but under grace. Thou art saved from the law, under the form of a covenant of works. Thou art not bound to keep its precepts, in order to have life for thy obedience, nor yet to suffer its penalties for thy disobedience. Thy surety undertook to act and suffer for thee. He was to answer the law in its commands and demands to every jot and tittle. And he did. Whatever it required, whatever it threatened, was perfectly fulfilled in the person of thy God and Saviour: And he has absolutely discharged thee from it, as a law of works. Thou art to have nothing to do with it in that view; nay, he has forbidden thee to keep it, in hopes that thou mayest live thereby. The irreversible decree entered in the records of heaven has enacted—**BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED.** Thou art now to look upon the law in the matter of justifying and giving life; as a woman looks upon her dead husband. She is freed from the marriage contract with him, and may now give her heart and hand to another: So art thou freed from the bond of the legal covenant. Thou art become dead to the law by the body of Christ, who has espoused and betrothed thee to himself, that serving him in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter, thou mayest bring forth fruit un-

to God. This is thy high privilege. Thy first husband is dead: happy for thee, thou art lawfully married to another—Thy husband is thy maker, Jehovah of hosts is his name. The word made flesh has paid all thy debts, suffered thy punishment; wrought out a perfect righteousness, and won a crown of perfect glory for thee. O what a divine honour has he put upon thee! Thou art now one with Immanuel in a bond of everlasting love. He has given himself to thee, with all he has and all he is; and it is thy happiness now, not to be thine own, but the Lord's—not to follow thine own will but his. The law of thy Lord is liberty. As taught by his spirit, and performed by faith it is perfect freedom. Whilst thou walkest with him in obedience to it, and leanest on thy beloved every step, thou wilt find deliverance from all spiritual tyranny and bondage, and wilt enjoy the light of his countenance, and the love of his heart. When the Son has thus made thee free, thou art free indeed—free now thy heart is set at liberty to run with Jesus in the way of his commandments.

In this view, O my soul, thou canst look with delight at the most holy law. Attend to it closely, and study it carefully. In order to obey, as a christian, these following considerations should be well understood and digested: because under the influence of

of them every step of thy walk is to be ordered. O pray then for the spirit of wisdom to teach thee practically :

First, that thy walk with God in the way of obedience is not to fulfil the law, as a covenant of works. Thou art not required to do this. Thou canst not do it. Immanuel, thy divine Surety, took it upon himself. Because it was impossible for thee, a fallen creature, to keep the law, so as to be justified by it, he therefore came in person to fulfil it. He honoured its precepts by his infinite obedience. He magnified its penalties by his inestimable sacrifice. And this is thy justifying righteousness. Through faith in the life and death of the God-man, thou art not only freed from guilt and condemnation, from curse and hell, but art also entitled to life and glory. The law is now on thy side, and is become thy friend. It acquits thee. It justifies thee. It will give thee the reward promised to obedience. The law in the hand of thy Saviour has nothing but blessings to bestow upon thee. Thou art to receive it at his mouth, and to obey him. But not from any legal hopes of heaven, or from any slavish fears of hell: for then thou wouldest come under the covenant of works again. Whereas thou art not under the law, but under grace: Mind thy privilege, and pray for grace to live up to it. Thou art not under the law, bound to

to keep it perfectly in thine own person, or in case of failing condemned by it, and under its fearful curse; but thou art under grace, through faith in the obedience and sufferings of thy blessed surety, and under the power of grace, sweetly inclining thee to love, and mightily enabling thee to keep the law of the Lord thy God. Live thus by grace; and sin shall not have dominion over thee. Under the reign of grace, the tyrant sin is always dethroned. Obey under grace, as freely and fully saved by faith in Jesus, and this will make thy walk easy and evangelical. Thou wilt go on with a free spirit, and wilt delight thyself in the ways of God, walking with him.

2. By faith, and not by sight: This is the great spring of all gospel obedience. Faith has an universal efficacy: for thus it is written—"Without faith it is impossible to please God." He is not pleased with the thing done, but with the principle on which it is done. He looks at the heart. Hearing the word or saying prayers, or giving alms, or doing any thing commanded, are not pleasing in themselves; but they must be performed upon a right motive, and to a right end. And both these come from faith. The apostle mentions the motive, which had influenced every step of his christian course, "We walk, by faith, and not by sight,"—we judge of our state by what

what God says of it, and we order our **walk** accordingly. We give credit to his witness of our being pardoned and justified freely by grace through faith, and we depend for the truth of this not on what we see, but on what we believe. We **tru** st not to our good frames, or warm feelings, or sensible comforts, or to any of the genuine fruits and effects of faith, but we trust what God says simply, as his record: and therefore we walk in a constant dependence on the truth of God in his word, and upon the faithfulness of God to his word. Some promised grace we stand in need of every step; and we rely upon his word, which cannot be broken, and upon his faithfulness, which cannot fail. Thus we go on, and we find the promise made good, according to our faith.

Such was the apostles **walk**. And is thine directed by the same motive? Search, O my soul, and examine upon what principle thou goest to duty. Is it in the obedience of faith? Dost thou take no step without the warrant of the word of God? Dost thou give full credit to what God says in it of thy state, as a justified person? And does this appear from thy dependence upon his faithfulness to make good every thing promised to them, who are in that state? Blessed art thou of the Lord, if thou art walking by this faith. O praise his holy name,

name, who has thus highly favoured thee, and ascribe to him all the glory. So will thy end be right, as well as thy motive. True faith takes no honour to itself. It is an emptying humbling grace. Its spring-head is in covenant love, and is given from distinguishing favour and sovereign mercy. It has no foundation, when given, but the word of God: nothing to rest on, but the divine truth: no support but the divine power: and no growth, but from the divine influence. What then does it leave a man to glory in? Whoever has it, has it all from God, and while he is in his right mind, living by it, he will be disposed to give God all the glory of it: Even for common mercies, as well as spiritual, he will live by the faith of the Son of God. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him. And thus he will go on sweetly and happily, obeying not from slavish fears or legal hopes, but

3. From holy love, which is the fruit and consequence of walking by faith. Faith worketh by love. The faith of the gospel, as a grace of the Spirit, worketh chiefly by love to God, and to man for God's sake: for the gospel discovers the way of salvation, contrived by the eternal Three, fulfilled in the life and death of Immanuel, and applied to

to the sinner's heart by the eternal Spirit. Whoever is enabled to believe the gospel, will see himself an object of the covenant love of the blessed Trinity, and will therefore love Father, Son, and Spirit: for we love him, says the apostle, because he first loved us. And faith in his love to us will make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful. Love is very active. Obeying from love is very sweet. How active! How sweet is obedience, when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us? He is an almighty agent. He overcomes the power of legal unbelieving workings, and puts a new spring to duty into the heart. He manifests the love of God in Christ, his free distinguishing love, the exceeding riches of it, and the numerous blessings flowing from it through time and eternity. In the sense of these mercies he excites gratitude, and puts it upon acting. This grace has a wonderful influence. "What return shall I make unto the Lord!" is the devout breathing of the grateful heart. While the love of Christ constraineth it, all the affections follow him, and the soul delights itself in his ways. Then none of his commandments will be grievous. Nay, his yoke itself will become easy, and his burden light: O triumphant love! How active, how sweet did he find it, who cried out "—I can do ALL things, I can suffer ALL things,

"things, I am more than conqueror,  
"through him that loveth me."

And is not this, O my soul, thy happy case? O prize thy privilege, and adorn it in thy life. Walk in love with thy reconciled God, and out of love to him perform all duties, and bear all crosses. Remember, thou art not required to obey, in order to be saved for thine obedience, but thou art already saved; and therefore, out of gratitude to thy dearest Saviour, thou art bound to love him and to obey him. Thou canst not love his person and yet hate his will. "If ye love me, says he, keep my commandments"—give this proof of it, keep in my way, doing my commandments. But whatever ye do, let it come from the heart. Obey me, but see it be with a willing mind, and with a free spirit. When all springs from love, then my service will be perfect freedom. I would have you to do my will, but without fear; not for life, but from life; not that ye may live, but because ye live. Do it, as sons, and not as slaves: the slave abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth for ever. In this free spirit of adoption serve me, as sons of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with me. Stand fast therefore in the liberty, where-with I have made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

To obey from life and salvation received and enjoyed is sweet liberty. To obey, as the condition of life and salvation is bitter slavery: it is an intolerable yoke, because it is not possible any fallen man should so keep the law, as to live thereby. But the believer freed from this condition by Christ's keeping the law for him is in liberty, he is saved from the penalty annexed to the transgression; he is entitled to the life promised to obedience, and thereby he is delivered from legal hopes and from guilty fears. In this faith he walks on delightfully in the way of obedience: for he is reconciled to the law through the grace that is in Christ Jesus: he loves it. O what love, says he, have I unto thy law! Because now I find it according to promise written upon my heart. And this is a

4. Motive to gospel obedience. The new covenant runs thus—"I will put, says "God, my law in their inward parts, and "write it in their hearts, and I will be their "God, and they shall be my people: and "they shall teach no more every man his "neighbour, and every man his brother, "saying, know the Lord: for they shall all "know me, from the least of them to the "greatest of them." The heart is by nature as hard as adamant. It is enmity itself against the holy law. But the Lord here engages to take away the stony heart, and

to

to give an heart of flesh, upon which he will write the ten commandments; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart. The Spirit of the living God will teach all his children to know their Father, he will manifest to them their adoption, he will reveal to them their Father's love in Jesus, and he will make their hearts happy in the enjoyment of it. Then the holy fruits of this love will appear towards man. It will work sweetly in benevolence, and effectually in beneficence. The love of God will open the contracted heart, enlarge the selfish, warm the cold, and bring liberality out of the covetous. When the holy Spirit teaches brotherly love he overcomes all opposition to it. He says to his disciples—" Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, for giving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." And he makes them kind one to another: they shew it by every good word and work. Thus by manifesting to them the Father reconciled in Jesus, and by enabling them to love man for his sake, he writes upon their hearts the two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets. The love of God, says the apostle to the Romans, is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost; and to the Thessalonians, ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. Thus he engages the affections of

the soul to the holy law, and inclines the inner man to love obedience. It ceaseth to be a yoke and a burden. How easy is it to do what one loves? If you dearly love any person, what a pleasure is it to serve him? What will not love put you upon doing or suffering to oblige him? Let love rule in the heart to God and to man, his law will then become delightful, and obedience to it will be pleasantness. The soul will run, yea inspired by love, it will mount up with wings as eagles, in the way of God's commandments.

Happy are the people, that are in such a case! And is it not, O my soul, in some measure thine? Hast thou not been taught to love God, and his ways? Since thou hast been acquainted with him as thy loving Father in Jesus, has not thy faith been working by love to him, and to his will, and to his whole household and family? Remember this is promised. All the children of God are to be taught to know and to love their heavenly Father. This is the very tenor of the covenant of grace, which the almighty Spirit has undertaken to fulfil. And he cannot fail in his office. It is his crown and glory to make good his covenant engagements. O trust him then, and put honour upon his faithfulness. He has promised to guide thee with his council, and to strengthen thee with his might in the way of obedience to

to thy reconciled God. What is within thee, or without thee to oppose thy walking in love with him, he will incline thee to relist, and he will enable thee to overcome. O what mayest thou not expect from such a divine friend, who is to abide with thee on purpose to keep thy heart right with God? What cannot he do, what will he not do for thee? Such as is the love of the Father and of the Son, such is the love of the Holy Ghost, the same free, perfect, everlasting love. Read his promises of it. Meditate on them. Pray to him for increasing faith to mix with them; that he, dwelling in the temple of thy heart, thou mayest have fellowship there with the Father and with the Son. Whatever in thee is pardoned through the Son's atonement, pray the holy Spirit to subdue, that it may not interrupt communion with thy God. And whatever grace is to be received out of the fulness of Jesus in order to keep up and to promote that communion, intreat the holy Spirit to give it thee with growing strength. But pray in faith, nothing wavering. So shall the love of God rule in thy heart. And then thou shalt be like the sun, when it goeth forth in its might, shining clearer and clearer to the perfect day. O may thy course be like his, as free, as regular, and as communicative of good, that thy daily petition may be answered, and that the will of thy Father may be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

When all these things concur, what can be wanting to make the way of obedience easy and pleasant? It is not now an hard burden, impossible to be borne. The Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, hath made it easy. He has reconciled the believer to the law; for he shews it to him in his surety magnified and made honourable—magnified infinitely in his life—made everlastinglly honourable in his death: so that the Father can get the fullest glory to every divine perfection, even to his justice, by saving sinners through faith in the righteousness of his Son: he can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. The believer persuaded of this is reconciled to God. Being no longer under the law, as a covenant of works, but under grace, he loves the law, and walks with God in sweet obedience to it. He sets out and goes on every step in faith—trusting to the acceptance of his person, and of his services in the beloved. He does not work now, in order to be saved; but he works, because he is saved. And he ascribes all he does to the praise of the glory of free grace. He works from gratitude, and the faith of God's elect always does. It never fails to shew itself by love. The holy Spirit wins the heart by revealing to it the love of God, and thereby draws out the affections after him. When the commandment comes, "My son, give me thy heart." The son is ready, "Lord,

“Lord, take it, and seal it thine for ever.” And whatever inbred enmity may remain against giving it to the Lord, the holy Spirit has undertaken to subdue it. It is his office to take away the stony heart, and to create an heart of flesh, soft and willing to receive the impression of this grace. With the same finger, which once wrote the holy law upon tables of stone, it is now written upon the fleshly tables of the heart. And then the love of God, and the love of man are clearly taught, and effectually enforced. What a change does this make in obedience! Hard things are now done with ease. Rough ways are made smooth. Painful things become delightful. The labour of love is sweet labour: because the heart is in it. The feet run: the hands work: all the faculties are ready to exert themselves, when love commands.

O my God, let it be thus with me. Thou hast given me an earnest desire to walk with thee in thy ways, guide me in them by thine almighty Spirit. Let him abide with me, holy Father, as the Spirit of adoption, that I may always serve thee, as thy reconciled child, not under the law, but under grace. I would gladly walk with thee every step by faith, and that faith working by love to thee and to thy whole will. O God, give me grace sufficient for my holy walk. Let thy faithful promise be daily fulfilled: write thy

Law still plainer in mine inward parts, and  
 let it be more fairly copied out in my life.  
 I want to love thee more, as thou knowest.  
 O my God, keep my heart sensible of the  
 exceeding riches of thy love to me; and let  
 the growing sense of this increase mine to  
 thee. In the strength of thy good Spirit  
 enable me to overcome inward and outward  
 opposition to my walking with thee in love.  
 Let him strengthen me mightily in the inner  
 man for every labour of love. From him  
 cometh power to embrace and to cleave  
 with full purpose of heart unto the ways of  
 God—to love what he loves—and to hate  
 what he hates. O thou blessed Spirit of the  
 Father and of the Son, make me willing,  
 keep me able to enjoy the Father's love  
 in his Son: and let it be a growing  
 love, abounding yet more and more in  
 knowledge, and in all sensible feeling, that I  
 may run and not be weary, may be going  
 on to the end and not be faint. Even so.  
 Let it be done unto thy servant according  
 to thy word, wherein thou hast caused me  
 to put my trust. Let me have fellowship  
 with the Father in his love through the sal-  
 vation of his Son by thine influence upon  
 my heart, now, henceforth and for ever.  
 Amen.

## C H A P. VI.

*The walk of the believer in the way of duty.*

IT is very hard to go on in a straight course, and for any length of time. The hindrances are many. To understand the nature and obligations of duty, to enter upon it with right motives, to perform it in a proper temper; to go through it without backwardness or weariness, not by constraint, but willingly; and to find the true end of doing it answered, these are great difficulties: But they will be removed in some measure out of the believer's walk; if he attend to what was said before of obedience in general, and if he be enabled to bring it into practice. It cannot be too often repeated, that the true believer is not under the law, as a covenant of works—bound to keep the precept for life; or liable to the penalty of death. He is not under the law in this respect, but under grace: He is one with Christ, who kept the precept, and suffered the penalty for him; as his surety; and in his stead. He has put in his plea, and taken the benefit of Christ's suretiship. His plea has been admitted; and therefore he is in a state of perfect acceptance: He stands in

the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free. Grace reigns in him, and over him, and renders his obedience perfect freedom. He obeys, but it is all in faith. He works, but it is from a sense of the Father's love to him in his Son. Gratitude taught by the holy Spirit influences his heart and life. His heart has the love of God written upon it, and his life manifests it. He serves God with a thankful mind and without fear, and cheerfully does all the good he can to man for God's sake.

The believer will never get on in the way of duty, unless he learns to obey upon these gospel principles. He will stand in need of their assistance at every step: For he will meet with constant opposition to them. The flesh will not come under grace. The carnal mind is always legal. The old man of sin knows nothing but working for life, and will not submit to any other way. Our sinful nature is altogether for the covenant of works. Jews, Turks, heathens, and nominal christians are all upon one plan: they expect God will be merciful to them for their doings. And the children of God are exercised with this self-righteous spirit more or less all their days. Is it not, O my soul, thy grief and burden? Art thou not daily plagued with it in thy duties? And though thy principles be very evangelical, yet they too often fail thee in practice. O beg of God then,

then, earnestly and often, that thou mayest be cast into the mould of the gospel, quite evangelized in thy mind, and mayest perform all duties upon such motives, as he himself requires and approves.

Duty is a debt owing to God—due from the creature to the creator. The obligation to it arises from the absolute dependence of the one upon the other; and it consists in acknowledging this in the appointed way by a perfect and continual service of every faculty—the creature being entirely subject to the will of the creator, and living in never-failing conformity to it: for the will of God doth bind all men on earth, and angels and glorified spirits in heaven. It is an unchangeable law obliging for ever all creatures to obedience, not only on account of the matter contained in it, but also with respect to the sovereign authority of the almighty lawgiver. And this obligation Christ in the gospel has not in the least dissolved, but on all occasions has confirmed and strengthened. How decisive are these words? “ Think not that I am come to “ destroy the law and the prophets, I am “ not come to destroy, but to fulfil,” to fulfil the law in mine own person, as the surety for my people, and to put the love of it into their hearts, and to engage them, and to enable them to practise it in their lives; though

though not for the same end, for which I fulfilled it.

Duty is always one and the same—a debt always due to God. But the debt of obedience being withheld, and the debt of suffering being incurred, the believer is taught to plead his discharge from suffering under Christ, and his fulfilling of obedience in the righteousness of Christ. With this faith he has a delightful prospect of duty. God is now at peace with him. God loves him in his Son. It is his high privilege to enjoy the sense of those distinguishing favours. For this end he is admitted to walk with his God. What an honour is this! Having received the adoption of sons, he is blessed with his Father's love, and is taken into near fellowship with him. What a happiness is this! “Son, all that I have is thine, “it is freely given to thee in Jesus, and thou “art now called upon to enjoy me and mine “in thy holy walk.” Here duty becomes his privilege. It is exalted and spiritualized into a gospel grace. He is bound to it, but it is by the cords of love. The pleasing bonds of gratitude tie his heart to obedience, to a free, holy, evangelical obedience. He obeys, not as a slave, but as a son—not for fear, but because Christ has set him at liberty—not that God may accept, pardon and justify him, but because God has done all for him, and will do all in him—not that

he

He may have heaven for his obedience, but because heaven is reserved for him, and he for it. He therefore looks at duty, as greatly refined by the gospel. Every act of it, done in faith, is an act of fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and by the grace of the Spirit every act brings the Father's love through the Son's salvation into experience. He has communion with his God in all he does. This ennobles duty. It is hereby raised to a divine honour: For it is hereby made, to them who are in Christ, the highest privilege they can have on this side of heaven.

When the holy Spirit writes the law upon the heart, he then teaches this obedience of faith. He does not abolish duty, but he enforces it upon right motives, and directs it to a right end. The same duties remain in the gospel, but not upon the same obligation. Law duties, as conditions of life, cannot be fulfilled. The judge himself has decreed, that by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Therefore the law as a covenant of works does not enter into the believer's obedience. He obeys, because he is freed from this covenant—not freed from doing the same duties, which this covenant required, but freed from doing them upon law motives, neither expecting the promised life on account of keeping the precepts, nor fearing the threatened

ened penalty on account of not keeping them. It is his privilege to obey, because he is saved. He works from a free spirit, and with a thankful heart. He does all his duties in faith. He is spiritual in them, acting upon the endearing motive of God's love to him in Christ, as it has been revealed to his heart by the holy Spirit. He hopes for the acceptance of them only through the intercession of Christ: And after he has done them, he desires grace from Christ to return him all his glory. Thus in every duty he aims at fellowship with God in Christ through the Spirit, and seeks to present an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well pleasing to God.

Whatever thou art required to do, remember, O my soul, that thou art under grace, and it is thy privilege to do it in faith. View the two tables in the hand of thy Saviour, and receive the ten commandments from his mouth. Happy for thee, Jesus is thy law-giver. His Spirit will gospelize thine obedience. He will bring thine heart into it. He will set thee in the chariot of love, and thou shalt ride on prosperously: He will oil the wheels of duty, and they shall run easy and pleasant. Thou shalt be carried sweetly through duty, thy beloved being present and conversing with thee in it: yea thy faith working by love to him will render fellowship with God in all thou doest,

the

the joy of thy heart and the glory of thy life.

O beg of thy divine teacher thus to spiritualize thine obedience. From him only canst thou learn the two great commandments, which are the sum and substance of the will of thy God. In the first his nature is revealed, and then his worship. He is the Lord thy God, Jehovah thy Alehim ; Jehovah means the self-existent Godhead, and Alehim, the persons in covenant, Father, Son and Spirit, partakers of the same self-existence, and divine glory, without any difference, or inequality. There can be no true religion without the true object of worship, and he cannot be worshipped, unless he be known ; therefore it is an indispensable duty to know the Lord God. But how shall fallen man attain to this knowledge ? He lost it by sin, and he cannot by any reasoning faculty or power of his own recover it. It is a matter of fact, that no man did ever by searching find out God. And attested by infallible authority, that the world by its wisdom knew not God. There is no true description of the Godhead, but what is revealed in scripture ; and it is altogether from the teaching of the holy Spirit, that any one savingly understands what is revealed. He as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation opens the eyes of the mind, sets the object before them, and gives a clear idea of it..

it. He takes of the things of God, and shews them to his disciples. He does not lead them into abstracted reasonings about the divine nature, or what the absolute God-head is, but his lessons are useful and practical. He teaches the knowledge of the persons in Jehovah, as they are related to sinners in the covenant of grace. Through him the Father is made known, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, Abba; Father," *Rom.* viii. 15. Through him the Son is believed in: for no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. He discovers the Father's love in the Son with its rich graces and abundant blessings, as it is written: we have "received; not the spirit of the world, " but the Spirit which is of God, that we "might know the things that are freely given to us of God." He makes known the giver, and the gifts, and he is received for that very purpose. He shines into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. And this is saving acquaintance with the Father and with the Son: For hereby the understanding is restored to the image of God; and the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

O what a mercy is this! What can call for greater praise! And this mercy, O my soul,

soul, is thine. Unspeakably gracious has the Lord been to thee. He has given thee the knowledge of himself. His image is upon thine understanding. His light is shining upon it; certainly it is as great an act, as when he first commanded the light to shine out of darkness: for hereby I believe in him, I know him to be my FATHER: O precious name! The love of his heart, and it is infinite: the blessings of his love, and they are numberless, he has called me to enjoy, freely, of mere grace, of his own sovereign good will—called me to the adoption of son, to the noblest dignity, yea to everlasting honour, to be a son of the most high God—God is my Father—my new-birth is from him—that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and has fellowship with the Father of Spirits. Behold! what manner of love this is! No parent ever loved, or can love a child as my Father which is in heaven loves me. And I desire in the sense of this to love him, to cleave to him with full purpose of heart, and gratefully to devote all I have and am to his service and to his glory. O thou divine revealer of this love, enlighten mine understanding and influence my affectios, that I may grow in the knowledge of my Father in Jesus: For

In

In him the Father only is to be known. He is his Father, as our covenant head, and therefore ours in him. God is not a Father to any but in Christ. The name Father respects Christ, as the first begotten, and then all his seed. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, and depends for its adoption on the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ's. He undertook to be made man, to live and to die for the many sons, whom he was to bring to glory: and in consequence of his undertakings it pleased the Father to lay up all fulness of grace for them in the God-man, their covenant head. And it pleases the Spirit to witness of this fulness, and to enable believers to receive out of it grace for grace. Thus he reveals Immanuel to them. They know him, and are one with him. He is their Lord and their God, and by faith they live in him and upon him. Trusting to his atonement and righteousness they have peace with their reconciled Father, and they enjoy his love shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Waiting in the appointed ways they grow in the knowledge of the wonderful person God-Jesus. They see more of the divine glory of his salvation work, and by depending on it daily they enjoy more of the things which accompany salvation. Thrice happy are they, whose acquaintance with Jesus is thus increasing.

creasing. Their happiness has a boundless subject. They may study on, and they will find in him new worlds of delight to eternity. O ye highly favoured, read and adore the wonders already wrought for you; among which these are not the least. "We know  
 " that the Son of God is come, and hath  
 " given us an understanding to know him  
 " that is true, and we are in him that is true,  
 " even in his Son Jesus Christ, who is the  
 " true God and eternal life." Blessed knowledge! they have an understanding given them, and they are savingly acquainted with the Father and with the Son by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Jehovah is their Alehim. Thus they learn the first part of their duty, which leads then to the

Second, Namely to love the persons in the Godhead, because they stand in this most endearing relation to them. They love the Father, who is their Father in Jesus. They have not only heard of, and believed in, but have also enjoyed his precious love. It has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost; who has overcome all resistance to his love; yea has made enmity itself yield to it. Having purified the conscience by faith, he then purifies the heart: He pours into it a sense of that love, which gave his co-equal Son for them, and all the blessings in earth and in heaven with him. Thereby he draws out the affections in holy desires

desires to be more united to the Father of mercies. It is the property of love to desire to be united to the beloved object. The Holy Spirit has discovered the object, and has given the desire, and he fulfils all the desires of his own creating. He teaches all the children of God to know their Father, and to experience his love to them in his Son, and then they cannot but love him. He creates the new heart for this very purpose ; and makes it sensible that the Father's love is all received through the Son, and therefore the Father and the Son are beloved with an undivided affection.

The Son is his office name. It should never be heard without putting us in mind of the wonderful love of our God in his undertakings. He covenanted to be made flesh. What a miracle of love is that ! He engaged with his Father to be the surety for his people, to do their work, to suffer their punishment, and then God and man, one Christ for ever, was to have all fulness of covenant blessings to give his people. The Father has no love, the Spirit bestows no grace, but what come through Christ. A believer is therefore taught in every thing he does to have fellowship with Christ. His safety, his happiness, his hopes of happiness to day and for ever are blessings to be received out of Immanuel's fulness : for he is the head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all

all in all. And while the member is receiving life and sense and happiness from the fulness of the head, he will have fresh motives to love his divine Saviour. What can fix his affections, if gratitude to Jesus cannot? He has every thing in him, that can win the heart. He has beauty to engage love, blessings to increase love, glories to increase love to him for evermore. He is beauty without a rival. Whatever is charming in any earthly object is but a ray from him, and should lead to him: it is but a beam to point out the matchless graces of Immanuel. And so is the loveliness of heavenly objects: saints and angels have nothing beautiful, but what the love of Jesus has put upon them. He is the Lord and giver of all their glory. How glorious then must he be? He is mine, says the believer, and my property in him makes him indeed glorious in mine eyes. Once I saw no beauty in him, that I should desire him; but now he is my beloved and my friend. I can see every thing truly lovely in my Lord and my God. Whatever else courts my heart appears to be but a shadow: the substance is my Jesus. He endears himself daily to me by his numberless favours. I am always receiving out of his fulness some blessing, which makes him the centre of my happiness. Every look of faith discovers in him some new excellency, and brings from him some fresh kindness,

kindness, and thereby engages my heart still more to its precious Saviour. And when I look forward to the glory to be revealed, when I shall see my dearest Jesus face to face, and shall be like him, and shall enjoy him, and in him all the blessings of the eternal Three for ever, O this is too big for present thought; yet it constrains me to give up my whole soul to this heavenly lover. Glorify him daily in me, thou faithful witness for Jesus, and give me continual reason to love thee with the same undivided affection, wherewith thou hast enabled me to love the Father and the Son.

The holy Spirit is Jehovah, a person in the self-existent Godhead, equal with the Father in every attribute. His office name is *Spirit*; the idea is taken from air such as we breathe, to denote his being the breather or inspirer of spiritual life. Every thing done by him in this character tends to holiness, and therefore he is called the *holy* Spirit. His office in the covenant, as well as his co-equality with the Father and the Son, entitle him to equal worship, and to equal love. For he undertook to carry into execution the purposes of the Father's love in Jesus. Their fulfilment depends entirely upon his grace. The Son has been incarnate; he has brought in everlasting righteousness, and made the atonement for sin: the Father is satisfied with his finished work, and

and has demonstrated his acceptance of it: the God-man is now upon the throne of glory with all power in heaven and earth. To this the holy Spirit bears witness. It is his divine office to apply the salvation of Jesus, and to make it effectual. He does all *in* the heirs of promise. The Father gave them to the Son, the Son redeemed them, but they are in the common mass of corruption, dead in trespasses and sins, till the Spirit of life enter into them. They feel not their guilt nor their danger, till he convince them. They are quite ignorant of God and of the things of God, till he make them wise unto salvation. They cannot believe in Jesus, till the Spirit of faith enable them. They cannot rejoice in the Father's love, till the Comforter make them sensible of it. They are without strength, until they be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. They cannot go on in their christian course, but by a constant supply of the Spirit. They cannot hold out to the end, but from his abiding with them for ever. So that he is the Lord and giver of life. He begins the good work, and he confirms it, until the day of Jesus Christ. Every motion of spiritual life is from him, and all those, whom he makes alive, he makes sensible of the debt which they owe him. He manifests his love to them, and thereby he engages their love to him. They experience, how great the love of

of the Spirit is. They are sensible of their obligations to him, and desire to be thankful for them. Thus their affections return to the proper object of love and worship. They receive daily the blessings of the Father's love through faith in the Son's salvation, by the applying power of the holy Spirit, and hereby they are reconciled to the first and great commandment ; it is become the delight of their souls to love the Lord their God.

Here consider, O my soul, whether thou art acting upon the principle of gratitude to thy God. If thou art, then his yoke will be easy and his burden light. Thou wilt not go to duty in bondage, hoping to gain his love by the desert of what thou doest, or fearing to be beaten with many stripes for not doing it well. Thy God whom thou servest is thy most loving friend, and tenderest father. He loved thee in Jesus, freely by grace, not by works done by thee, or to be done. Immanuel is thy Saviour : His love to thee is made up of miracles. No understanding of angels or of glorified spirits can conceive how great it is : for it passeth knowledge. Nevertheless the holy Spirit has revealed it unto thee. He loves thee, as the Father and the Son do, with the same divine affection. Thy debt is equal, thy gratitude should be the same to the blessed Trinity. In the sense of thine infinite obligations thou art called upon to walk

walk in the way of duty. Love to the person, whom thou art to serve, will make service pleasant. And thou dost love thy God. He has given himself with every covenant blessing to be thine, and these blessings are to be enjoyed in thy walk with him. With this faith look at duty. It is the expression of gratitude to thy dearest friend, and it is the way to enjoy his divine friendship. He requires it out of love to thee, and would have thee to do it out of love to him. O! how exalted is duty, when communion with God is carried on by it! He would have thee to keep close to him, in order to maintain a sense of his gracious presence in thy heart, and so walk with him as to have his love to thee confirmed at every step; and therefore thou shouldst seek to preserve a constant nearness and holy fellowship with him in every thing thou doest. This is the will of thy God. May it be thine, O my soul. Study this glorious way of gospel duty. Pray to be taught it better, and to go on in it more spiritually every day. Bring it into all thy affairs. In thy calling, as well as in the means of grace, in temporal as well as in heavenly matters, set the Lord always before thee, and so live, and act in every thing as to keep up communion with thy God and Father in Jesus by the grace of the holy Spirit.

When God is thus become the dear object of thy happy heart, then every way wherein his love is to be enjoyed will become delightful. The time, the place, the means of meeting with him will be greatly desired and much longed for. Thy heart cannot but be, where thy treasure is. Thou wilt want no spur to duty, no whip to drive thee to ordinances. It will be enough, that the Lord is there. As when he said to David—seek ye my face—his heart replied—thy face, Lord, will I seek. His heart said it. His affections were set upon God, and he was ready to seek, wherever God was to be found. No hunted hart ever panted more after the water-brooks, than his soul did after God. His hope in doing any thing was to have God's gracious presence with him. And his happiness in it was to have communion with God. This is gospel duty. And what a glorious privilege is it! O that it may be my happy experience thus to meet God in all his ways, and to enjoy him in my daily walk. That thou mayest grow in this divine fellowship, consider, O my soul, some of the duties of the first table, and learn to practise them upon gospel principles. The first and chief is PRAYER, which consists in keeping up daily converse with thy God upon all occasions. This is the breathing of the new born soul. It wants to draw the air of heaven, and to

live

live in its own proper element. There is a way opened for it unto the throne of glory, and the children of God may approach it with boldness: for it is a throne of grace, and he that sitteth upon it loves to hear and to answer their petitions. He is *their* Father. “I go, says Jesus, to my Father and to your Father; “my Father himself loveth you; ask what “ye will of him in my name he will do it.” This is the beloved object of prayer—a reconciled Father in Jesus—whose heart is full of tenderness to the complaints and miseries of his family—his promises are the declarations of his pure love—a dependence upon his fulfilling them does honour to his truth and faithfulness, and always brings down the blessing. The holy Spirit abides with the children of God to teach them thus to pray in faith. He helps their infirmities in prayer, strengthens their graces, and bestows on them their comforts. He enables them to come with boldness, and to have access with confidence. Whatever their Father has freely promised to give them in Jesus, they can ask in faith nothing wavering: for they know his promises cannot fail. They find them daily fulfilled, whereby their holy familiarity with their Father increases. He draws nearer to them, and they draw nearer to him. This their mutual intercourse may be interrupted, but it cannot be

entirely broken off. God is always disposed to hear, although the believer be not always able to pray rejoicing. It is still his privilege, although he may not find any great delight in it; but if he continue to make constant use of his privilege his delight will return, and God will fulfil to him the gracious promise—I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Thus the child of God learns to love prayer, yea to pray without ceasing. He lives under his Father's eye, and in a dependence on his Father's care for him night and day. And he has hereby as true and lasting fellowship with the things of God in his soul, as he has with the things of this world in his body.

O what an exalted privilege is this! How highly is prayer hereby ennobled! It is not a law duty to an absolute God: but a gracious intercourse with a covenant God.—Not practised that he may love us: but because he loves us—not to make us his children: but because we are his children. It should be performed always in this faith. If there be infirmities in it, such as wandering, coldness, or the like, we are to remember, that we are not heard for the goodness of our prayers, nor answered for the fervency of them. That which makes our persons accepted obtains acceptance for our services also. We and all we do are only accepted in the

the beloved : " For through Jesus Christ we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father." *Eph.* ii. 18 our access is through Jesus Christ. Trusting to his finished salvation we enter into the presence of the Father, and guided by the holy Spirit we pray in faith. Whatever we ask in the Son's Name we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him. This spiritualizes prayer, and puts glory upon it, because there is heavenly fellowship with God in it, with the Father through the Son, by the one Spirit.

These are some of the privileges of Christian prayer. Thou goest, O my soul, to meet thy God in it—to converse with thy Father—to call on him for the fulfilling of his promises made in Jesus—to wait on him for his answers—and to give him his glory. O what blessed seasons hast thou enjoyed in this communion with thy God ! How has he manifested his nearness to thee, and bounty towards thee ! Hast thou not found his heart open, his ears open, and his hands open to grant thee the request of thy lips ? And when thou hast not found such sweet fellowship with thy God in prayer, yet thy dependence on his faithful word has been exercised and improved. Thou hast left thy petitions with thy friend and advocate, trusting to that most glorious description of him in *Rev.* viii. 3, 4. " And another angel came

“ and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.” O thou great angel of the covenant, thus present my prayers. They are nothing worth, but as perfumed with thy divine odors. Let them ever ascend before God out of thy hand with the smoke of the incense of thy sacrifice and intercession. Blessed Spirit of prayer, increase my faith, that I may trust more to a prayer hearing God and Father above always ready to grant every good thing promised to his children in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Prayer and PRAISE go together. The prayer of faith will afford continual matter for praise. The one is a dependance on God for every promised blessing, the other is the acknowledgment of his having bestowed it. Innocent man had his heart in this sweet work. It was his happiness. Every breath in paradise was praise. The redeemed man has more reason. His obligations are far greater, than Adam was under, to his God—raised from his fall—saved from the guilt and misery of it—chosen and called to this salvation by mere grace—through faith a partaker

partaker of it—an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, O what motives are these to continual thankfulness! And these motives are effectual, when the holy Spirit discovers the things that are freely given to us of God. He makes us sensible of them and thankful for them: for he preserves in the soul a blessed poverty of spirit, an humble abiding sense of wants and unworthiness, and thus he lays a sure foundation for thankfulness. Every blessing is then received with a, Why me—what am I, and what is my Father's house, that God should deal thus bountifully with me? I must refer it all to the praise of the glory of his own grace: blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. All these blessings flow from the Father's love in his Son, and the holy Spirit has discovered to me that boundless ocean of love, and has often refreshed me with its life-giving streams. He has made known to me the good pleasure of the Father's will, which he had purposed in himself, to choose me by his distinguishing grace to be one of his children, and through faith in Jesus Christ I read my adoption, and take possession, of the inheritance of children. Mine experience of these blessings cannot be questioned, while I am receiving out of the fulness of Jesus grace for grace. O how great is

my debt ! It is equal to the eternal Three ; so should my gratitude be. It is very meet, right and my bounden duty, that I should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty everlasting God : therefore with angels and arch-angels and with all the company of heaven I laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts : heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

May such as this, O my soul, be thy daily tribute of thanks. Consider what thou oweſt to thy God—how great are his favours, how many, how endless—and bestowed on the most unworthy. Review his goodness in giving thee being, and in preserving it. Remember from how many dangers and pains he has delivered thee ; what health and creature comforts he has vouchsafed of his mere bounty ; and what a monument of his long suffering thou art. O what a miracle that one, like thee, should be out of hell. Then put to the account spiritual favours, what blessings thou hast received from the Father's love in Jesus ; what blessings thou art entitled to in him, not only in time, but also in eternity. Cast up the mighty sum, and say, How much it is. Canſt thou tell the numbers thereof ? No. It is beyond the power

power of the greatest arithmetician. If thou couldst write a figure upon every atom in the creation, thou wouldst want a new world, whereon to cast up the vast account: for thy mercies reach to the heaven of heavens, and they are also everlasting. Then consider, to whom thou art thus indebted. Is it not to a justly offended God, who might have glorified all his perfections in punishing thee for thy sins? Whereas in wonderful grace he has chosen and called thee to the adoption of Sons. He is thy Father. This is the spring of all thy mercies. In love he gave his Son to finish thy salvation. And his Spirit has brought thee to believe in it, and to enjoy it. This is the source of all thy praise. The object of thanksgiving is thy covenant God, who is related to thee in such a bond of love, as will bring thee under eternal obligations. Thou art therefore in all thy praise to remember thy relation to Father, Son, and Spirit, thy debt to them for that most blessed relation, thy growing, ever growing debt. Praise will pay none of it. The saints in glory do but acknowledge it. While they are praising more the sum is increasing. O my soul, beg of thy God to give thee grace, that thine acknowledgments may be in some measure like theirs. They are crying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God, giving glory for the Father's love in Jesus, and for their experience of it by the eternal

Spirit. May this subject be thine, more spiritual, more holy every day, till it be what theirs is, perfect and without intermission.

Since it is thy privilege, O my soul, to pray to thy covenant God, and to praise him for covenant mercies, then thou wilt highly prize the holy **SCRIPTURES**; because without them thou canst not know what to pray for, nor what is indeed a mercy. Thy faith has nothing to stand upon, but the word of God, and nothing to praise him for, but mercies therein promised, and by believing received. O how dear then should his word be to thee; how greatly studied, how diligently heard, that by it thou mayest grow in every grace, which is needful for thy holy walk with God. It is the appointed means by which the holy Spirit acts. It is His great instrument in beginning and carrying on spiritual life. He opens the understanding to know the scriptures, he inclines the will and the affections to receive them in the love of the truth, and he influences the whole man to submit to live under the obedience of faith. Whatever strength, victory, comfort, or blessing of any kind he bestows, it comes by obeying the truth through the Spirit, so that thou canst not go on in thy walk with God, but by constant and believing use of the scriptures. They should be thy study night and day, heard and read carefully,

ly, mixed with faith, treasured up in thy memory, received into thy heart, and brought into thy life, and all by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, in order to thine enjoyment of the promised blessings of the Father's love through the Son's salvation. Thus the word will be the means of thy maintaining fellowship with the blessed Trinity. By mixing faith with it thou wilt be constantly receiving from them covenant mercies: and so thou wilt go forward. Thy steps will be ordered aright according to the word, and thy way will be prosperous.

Consider then, O my soul, whether thou art making this use of the scriptures. Dost thou find them the means of thy growth in divine knowledge, in faith and love? Do they really promote thy communion with God, and on that account are they daily more thy study, and thy delight? Never think of hearing or reading them without praying for the teaching of the holy Spirit, that they may be the means of keeping up fellowship with thy Father in Jesus. For this end they were revealed, and if this end be not answered they profit thee nothing. Make it then thy constant practice—before hearing, to pray for a spiritual appetite, that as new born babes desire milk, so thou mayest hunger and thirst for the good word of life—in hearing, beg of God, that thou mayest feed upon the word and digest it, and

thine inward man may be nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine—after hearing, pray for a sanctified memory to treasure up for use, what thou hast learnt, that as occasion shall serve it may be realized, and brought into practice, thy life and conversation being cast into the mould of the word. With the same dependence on thy divine teacher read, as well as hear, the scriptures. Meditate on them. Converse about them, expecting to find them able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus, and as thy faith in him increases, able to bring in richer experience of thy Father's love in him.

How sweet is prayer, how delightful is praise, how blessed is hearing and reading the word, when these are the means of meeting and conversing with God? His presence puts the highest honour upon them, and exalts duty into a royal privilege: for he is present as a Father with his children. O what a dignity is it to have God for our Father! What an happiness to have free fellowship with him in this dearest relation! In thy daily hearing and reading his word, observe, O my soul, what is spoke of this holy fellowship; and seek to maintain it, and to improve it in every appointed way, particularly in keeping the command of thy dying friend.

D O

*Do this in remembrance of me.* When his disciples meet together for this purpose, then place the whole dependence of thy heart upon thy crucified Saviour. Considering the infinite and everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of his body and soul to take away sin, draw near in faith to feast upon it: for his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Look well to the end of the institution. It was not only to remind thee of, but also to convey to thee, all the blessings of that one offering, which perfects for ever. It was to teach thee, that thy spiritual life, and every grace and comfort of it are as dependent upon Christ crucified, as the life of thy body is upon the meat and drink of this world. Thy life comes from his death. Thy life is nourished by feeding upon Christ thy passover, who was sacrificed for thee. He intended by the bread to point out unto thee his body, and by the wine his blood—by eating and drinking them, thy taking him and living upon him—by thy bodily support received from them, the nourishment of thy soul by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. He would have thee to look through the signs to the things signified. Thou art not to rest in the outward act, but to rest in the promise in the word of God. Thy faith is not to be exercised about the Lord's Supper as a duty; but it is to be exercised upon his word; and what

what he has therein promised to make it, that thou art to expect in taking it. He appointed it to be the means of communicating with him, and of thy enjoying fellowship with him in his sufferings. It is a spiritual believing act, in which thou art invited to partake of the paschal lamb. It is the Lord's passover; and will certainly answer every purpose, for which he instituted it. He appointed it to be the means of safety from the destroyer, of deliverance from bondage, of free and full forgiveness of all sins, of an happy passage through the red sea, and of everlasting possession of the promised inheritance. For these gracious purposes the Father's love gave his Son to be a lamb slain, and then a lamb feasted on: and the holy Spirit makes it a feast indeed. It is to the believing receiver spiritually, whatever the passover was to the Jews in Egypt. It is a communion with the blessed Trinity—with the Father for providing such a banquet of love—with the Son for giving himself to be a lamb slain, and to be a spiritual repast to his people in earth and in heaven—with the holy Spirit for rendering the bread which is broken, the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup of blessing the communion of the blood of Christ. Communion signifies union with—the believer united to Christ—one with Christ—a member in his body lives in him, and on him, has communications

nications of life, nourishment, strength, comfort, &c. as the members have from their union with the head. He has a real inward fellowship with Jesus, in his cross and passion, in his resurrection and ascension, in his intercession and sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high. He communicates now with Jesus in all the blessings of his Father's love, and will communicate with him in all his Father's glory. O what a privilege is the Lord's Supper, when it is thus the means of communion with the Son, and with his Father through the Spirit ! What an honour is it to be admitted to a feast instituted by the lamb of God, and for the enjoyment of the love of God ! What a blessing is it to sit down now to the marriage supper of the lamb, and to partake by faith of its spiritual realities and delights ! There is nothing beyond this upon earth, and it has sometimes been to the believing receiver a foretaste of heaven. Yes, blessed be God, it has been, even to thee, O my soul, unworthy as thou art of one crumb from the master's table, a feast of fat things, of wines kept, even of fat things, full of marrow, of wines kept and well-refined. And when thou hast not been so highly feasted, yet thou hast enjoyed solid communion. Partaking of the bread and wine according to the Lord's institution, and depending on the Lord's promise, thou hast been fed and nourished at his

his table. The virtue of the Spirit has been put forth in thy heart, and thou hast as truly by faith eat the flesh, and drank the blood of the Son of man, as thou didst eat the bread and drink the wine. It was strictly speaking a *communion*: being united to Christ, thou wast a partaker of Christ, and hadst fellowship with him in his life and death. O pray for more of this. Beg of the holy Spirit to increase thy communion with Jesus, that thou mayest live more in him and on him, and thereby enjoy more of the love of thy heavenly Father. Plead his promise, and expect the fulfilling of it: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him: As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." *J. vi. 56, 57.*

Viewing the duties of the first table in this light, how exalted are they, and spiritual? What a glory does it put upon them, that the believer has fellowship with the eternal Three, and in prayer, and praise, in hearing and reading the word, and at the Lord's Supper he enjoys their covenant mercies, partaking of them now as really by faith, as ever he will by sense in heaven? The law written and engraven in stones was glorious, but the law thus written upon his heart excelleth in glory. The two first tables of stone were broken, the other two are lost: but

but no time shall deface the writing of the holy Spirit. The new heart, turned in love to God, shall keep his impression for ever. Faith should rest securely upon this: because he has undertaken to abide for ever with his own people, that the purposes of the Father's love, and the blessings of the Son's salvation may be always enjoyed by them. In remembrance of this great truth they keep the

LORD'S DAY. They rest on it from labour, declaring thereby their belief of the rest, which the eternal Three have provided in Jesus—a rest in their souls—given without their labour and pains—secured to them by covenant—kept for them by almighty power—a sabbath remaining for the people of God, into which they shall as certainly enter, as Jesus their forerunner is entered. Sabbath signifies a day of rest. It was set apart in memory of God's finishing the works of the first creation; and is observed now in memory of his finishing the works of the new creation. The end for which the world was made will be answered soon; and then it, and all the works therein shall be burnt up, and the place of them found no more: but the glorious work of the God-man shall endure for ever. In honour of this greatest work of God we keep the Lord's day. It is his Sabbath—a day eternally famous for his finishing the work of salvation, and

and entering into his rest. "And we who  
"have believed, says the apostle, do enter  
"into rest." We do enter into it now by  
faith, and we share with him in his Sabbath.  
The atonement which he made, the righteousnes  
which he wrought out, the victory  
which he obtained, the works which he per  
fected for ever, and the glory which he now  
inherits, we enjoy at present by believing,  
and enter upon the possession of them. Ac  
cording to our faith, such is our rest. He  
that believes without doubt or wavering in  
the finished salvation of Jesus, he will have  
the peace of God ruling in his conscience, he  
will experience the perfect love of God to  
him, which will make him rest in his love to  
God, and then he will delight himself in the  
ways of God. This is the christian Sabbath.  
It consists in resting upon Jesus, and in de  
pending upon his having finished the works  
of redemption, and then in living upon them  
for our souls, as much as we do upon the  
works of creation for our bodies.

Sweet is the day of rest, spent in this holy  
employment: Happy time! set apart for  
spiritual intercourse with God, and conse  
crated for keeping up fellowship with him  
in his fatherly love in Jesus, and for receiv  
ing from him communications of his graces  
and blessings. Thrice happy day! in which  
this fellowship is kept up, and these graces  
and blessings are enjoyed. By this heavenly  
converse

converse the inward man is renewed with growing strength: his faculties are enlarged; and their happiness is increased. By which means he comes nearer to the spiritual rest of the heavenly sabbath. He calls it his delight, holy of the Lord, honourable; because the end of its institution is answered to him, and he has on it happy communion with his God. When he draws near to God in his appointed ways, he finds God in them and experiences his loving kindness, which is better than life itself. Blessed is the man, who is thus highly favoured. He enters within the veil into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and finds a most loving Father upon a throne of grace. In every service on the Lord's day, he seeks a more intimate acquaintance and more spiritual fellowship with him. His very heart is engaged in this work. His soul thirsteth, and his very flesh longeth to meet God, as he has met him in the sanctuary. Therein he has found communications of grace, which has rendered the ordinances delightful indeed. He rejoices in hopes of meeting God and of drawing near to him in prayer, of praising him still more and more for his abundant mercies, of hearing the reviving sound of gospel grace, and of everlasting love, and of receiving it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, and of sitting down to the banquet of heaven in communion with Christ crucified,

crucified, through him partaking of the Father's love by the Spirit's influence. Blessed is he of the Lord, who is thus spiritual in sabbath duties. By keeping up constant communion with God in them his blessedness is increasing. He is already in possession of the same things, which his elder brethren are enjoying in heaven: and he will become more heavenly minded, while he maintains daily fellowship with the eternal Three in their covenant offices and blessings.

Consider, O my soul, that these privileges are thine. Look well to thine improvement of them. Remember thou art already by believing entered into rest. Thy sabbath is begun—a day, whose sun shall never set—whose glory shall shine brighter for evermore. May thine enjoyment of this rest, which is so glorious, be growing, until thou attain to the eternal sabbath. O pray thy Lord to lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, to educhise thee more of the love of his heart, and more of the bounty of his hand, more communion with him, and more communications from him, that thou mayest be growing up into Jesus in all things, and be ready, whenever he calls thee, to enter in with him into his perfect rest.

Thus the first table duties are kept. By the teaching of the holy Spirit they become gospel

gospel privileges. When he makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus, then we take the Three in Jehovah to be our God. We know our Father in Christ, believe in him and love him. We will have no other Gods but him. We give his honour to none, his name to none, our time and heart-service to none, but him. His love made known to us, engages our affections, and puts us upon seeking fellowship with him in all appointed ways. Yea, the more we know of his perfect love to us, the more we are disposed to love him, and to witness it in every thing we do. It becomes our study to walk before him in all well pleasing: for we find it our happiness. Whether we eat or drink, rise up, or lie down to rest, follow our worldly calling, or have any dealings with men, we endeavour to do all in faith. This makes the common things of life spiritual actions: because in them we maintain intercourse with God. This is indeed the heavenly temper of the children of the most High. They seek the presence, and the blessings of their Father in Jesus in all they do. They are taught to live in a simple dependence upon him. They acknowledge this dependence by looking up to him for every thing needful, and having received it by giving him all his glory. Then they are returned in heart and life to that God, from whom they had departed.

Most

Most blessed return ! For now the old sinful nature with its affections and lusts is pardoned, and thereby they have lost their dominion. They have no right to exercise their tyranny any longer. The base selfish tempers, which rendered a man a plague to others, and often a burden to himself, are dethroned. The pardoning them is subduing them. These always go together. They kept the understanding in darkness, but now it is light in the Lord. They blinded the conscience and made it insensible, but now it has seen its guilt, and has found peace with God. The heart was engaged in their service, but now God has set up his throne in it, and sweetly rules over the affections. Thus a free pardon brings a man into liberty. He ceases to be a slave to his selfish tempers. A full pardon brings him full victory over them : for then he has the blood of Jesus to cleanse him from all sin, and the Spirit of Jesus to subdue all sin. He is taken into the protection of Christ, and is his free-man. None shall make him a slave. The Spirit of Christ rules in him, and makes him willing to live under the reign of grace : He dwells and abides with him to preserve in his heart the love of God, and produce in it the proper fruits of that love towards men. Thus he brings the sinner to love the

DUTIES OF THE SECOND TABLE, which our Lord has summed up in one sentence—

“ Thou

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” This love was lost at the fall. Nothing is in mankind by nature but selfishness. He is a slave to divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Every age has felt this malady, and complained of it. But no human means have been able to remedy it. Fine systems of ethics, and beautiful plans of natural religion have been tried; the aid of strong reasoning, assisted with the forces of logic and metaphysics, has been called in, but all in vain. Selfish tempers broke through their cobweb arguments, and sported with their imaginary bonds. Sometimes they polished the outside a little, and made a man a courtier: he looked, and smiled, and seemed to love; but they did not reach his heart. This is the prerogative of the Lord God. He only, who made us creatures, can make us new creatures. And until we are new born of God, we have every thing in us opposite to brotherly love. But when we are born of the Spirit, then we are taught of him to love one another. He teaches it, and he enforces it. His lessons are entirely practical. He not only informs the understanding, but also influences the affections. Having disposed and enabled the heart to love God, he evidences the power of this divine love, by its genuine fruits towards men. These are inseparable from their cause.

Divine

Divine love is never without brotherly love: for so far as the love of God is felt, it produces loving tempers. It opens and enlarges the heart, as the warm beams of the sun open and expand the flowers. The agency, which performs this, is almighty. The holy Spirit having begotten the new nature writes upon it the law of love. He keeps it willing to resist, and makes it able to overcome, the selfish tempers of the old man. The apostle Peter, has given us a delightful description of the manner of the divine proceeding herein, *1 Pet. i. 21, 22, 23.* "Christ was manifest in those last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God: seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The christians to whom he writes were partakers of the new birth, they were born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. The holy Spirit was the author of their regeneration. The word of truth was the means, which he made use of, they obeyed the truth through the Spirit. By believing it they were begotten again to a lively

a lively faith and hope in God. They evidenced their love to him by their unfeigned love of the brethren : they loved him that begat, and loved those also that were begotten of him. From whence it appears, that the love of the brethren is not in the heart by nature, but is from the grace of the holy Spirit. He gives a new heart, and he sheds abroad in it the love of God, which by his influence works mightily in opposing and overcoming our selfish tempers, and in establishing the practice of second table duties. These spring from divine love. The holy Spirit joins them together, as the cause and the effect. He teaches no man to love God without teaching him also to love the brethren. He rains and shines upon the tree of love : under his cultivation it thrives : He brings forth the sweet and loving tempers of the new man, and they bear fruit abundantly. And blessed fruit it is : for God has great glory from it, and men much good. Love thinketh, speaketh, and doeth no evil. Yea, it cannot be in the heart, without a desire to do good to all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith—to do good to their bodies and souls—to give honour to whom honour is due—to preserve their lives—their property—their chastity—their good name—to bear no false witness, but always to speak the truth of them—and to covet none of their blessings, either

spiritual or temporal. This is morality—christian morality—for it is learnt no where but in the school of Christ. What his Spirit teaches, he enables also to perform, which moral persuasion cannot. He gives a will and a power to put off the selfish tempers of the old man, and to put on the loving graces of the new man: These graces he preserves by his almighty agency, and calls them into daily practice, through faith working by love—love to God from a sense of his infinite goodness—and love to man for God's sake. Thus the second table duties, when done out of gratitude to God for his infinite mercies, help the believer on in his walk heavenwards, and are the means of maintaining constant fellowship with his God.

Is this, O my soul, thy happy experience? Examine carefully. What are thy tempers? What is thy practice, with respect to loving thy neighbour as thyself? There is great complaint in the world of the want of brotherly love. And no wonder. It cannot be in them, who are wholly lovers of themselves. But may not the same complaint be taken up of the household and family of faith? Are not the children of the same Father deficient in brotherly love? Yes, they are. Too often they live below their privilege, and thereby bring great dishonour upon God, and give great offence to men. Be humbled, O my soul, for thine own failing.

Remember,

Remember what reason thou hast to mourn for the infirmities of thy love,—how barren it is in its proper fruits—how cold, when it should be fervent—how polluted, when it should be pure—how covetous, when it should be liberal. Hast thou duly attended to the cause of this, and does it grieve thee to thy heart? Wouldst thou be saved from self-love, and increase in brotherly love, yet more and more? Since this is thy case, meditate carefully upon what is promised, and pray earnestly for what is provided, for the subduing of those tempers which are enemies to brotherly love, and which if not subdued will hinder thee from enjoying the love of God in thy walk with him.

First, Consider thy state. Thou art a pardoned sinner, not under the law, but under grace—freely, fully saved from the guilt of all thy sins. There is none to condemn, God having justified thee. He sees thee in his Son, washed in his blood, cloathed in his righteousness, and he embraces him and thee, the head and the members, with the same affection.

Secondly, Consider what is promised to them, who are in Christ. Sin shall not have dominion over them. Pardoned sin shall not reign. It cannot, for it is de throned. Thou art therefore free from its bondage. Stand fast in this liberty. Now the condemning power of sin is taken out of thy

conscience, make use of the grace provided in Jesus to deliver thine heart from the love of it, and thy conversation from the slavish service of it. And remember this grace is almighty. Trust in it, and thou shalt be saved from the tyranny of every sin. Therefore

Thirdly, Read the great charter of grace, and mark to what glorious privileges thou art entitled. Being saved from the guilt of all sin, and having a promise of being saved from the dominion of all sin, as the Lord's freeman, thou art by faith to claim thy birth-right, and to enjoy it. Since Christ has given thee liberty, to whom shouldst thou be a slave? Put off therefore the old man with his lusts and deeds: serve him no longer: it is a blessed part of redemption to be saved from his service. God be thanked that he may be put off, as a garment, which you have done with, and will put on no more. Away with it, it is filthy and abominable altogether. Yea worse still: the plague is in it. Death and hell are in it: for the old man, sinful nature, thus to be put off, is a body of sin, and selfish tempers are his members, such as anger, wrath, malice, lies, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry. These must be put off, or they will be always plotting and acting against brotherly love. Therefore the new man, renewed in the spirit of his

his mind, opposes them, and is mighty through God to mortify them. By the same power he puts on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forgiveness of injuries, even as Christ forgave him, so he forgives: and unto all these graces he puts on love, which is the complete binding of them together. What an amiable character is here of the new man! He is created anew in Christ Jesus, that he may exercise every kind and benevolent temper to the brethren. He is renewed in his heart to the unfeigned love of them; and is enabled to manifest it by every work and labour of love. And lest the vile tempers of the old man, still in being, although dethroned, should get dominion again, he is strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man to crucify them day by day. Since this is hard work, consisting in continual and severe self-denial, no less than in cutting off right hand, and in plucking out right eye, lusts; for thine encouragement to persevere, consider

Fourthly, That thou art *in* Christ—a member in his body—and in him thou hast perfect and eternal redemption from the old man of sin with his affections and lusts. The more this is believed, the more will the fruits of it appear. Faith in the absolute and everlasting victory of thy glorified head

will animate thee as one of his members to resist thy vanquished foes, knowing thou art a partaker of his victory, and in his strength, and to his glory thou art fighting against them. In him thou hast already conquered. In him thou art more than a conqueror. Reckon thyself therefore to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God *in* Jesus Christ thy Lord. And depend on him for the power of his death, that he may put it forth in thee, and mortify sin, and for the power of his resurrection to quicken thee to newness of life. Thy communion with him in his death and resurrection will be in proportion to thy faith. If thou believest stedfastly, that thou art one with him, thou wilt find the effect of it in stedfast communion. Cleave then to him, as a branch in the vine. Planted together in the likeness of his death, thou wilt find virtue from him to crucify thy selfish tempers. Planted together in the likeness of his resurrection, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to keep thee alive to God. To this fellowship with Jesus thou art called. Thou hast a right to communicate with him in his life and death. And whilst thou art enjoying it by the faith of the Son of God, sin shall have no more dominion over thee, than it has over him. This being thy glorious birth-right, O my soul, put honour upon it. Enjoy it in the peace of thy conscience, and in the love of thy heart. Read thy perfect

perfect redemption in Jesus from every thing opposite to brotherly love, and improve this in thy experience. As there is grace sufficient promised and provided for thee, see thou make use of it and manifest it openly in thy tempers and in thy walk ! For consider

Fifthly, Thy God and Father calls upon thee to give glory to him for his love to thee by exercising love towards the brethren : and thou art bound to this by ten thousand ties. Has he loved thee freely, dost thou know it, is the grateful sense of it upon thy heart ? How then can it be hid ? It cannot ; it will manifest itself, as light does. The Father has chosen thee in his Son, that he might communicate to thee of his goodness, and he has made thee a child of light, that thou mightest reflect the rays of his goodness upon others. Thou art to shew forth the praises of him that hath called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light. He hath called thee out of the deadness and blindness of thy natural state, and hath enlightened thee with the light of life. How marvellous, that it should ever shine upon thee ! Marvellous indeed, that thou shouldst shine, as a light in the world ! Admire this grace. Let others admire it with thee by seeing the reality, and by feeling the comfort of it. As the sun not only enlightens, but also enlivens with his fruitful rays the face

of the earth, and cheers every creature upon it : so let thy light shine before men. Give them clear proof of thy love to God by thy love to them : let them feel the blessed fruits of it, that they may see thy good works and glorify thy Father who is in heaven. Love in thy heart will shew itself. It will communicate its gracious rays, and the Father of lights will have the praise. This should be thine end, as it is his. He aims at his own glory in all his mercies : this aim should be thine also. Thy Father calls upon thee to do good to others, that he may be glorified thereby. O what an high calling is thine ! What an honour does God put upon thee. Thou art to bring him glory from men—from his own children : for their bowels are to be refreshed by thee—and from others, that whereas they would speak against thee as an evil-doer, they may by thy good works which they shall behold glorify God in the day of visitation. Aim at this. Look at no motive to do good to men below the glory of God. And remember, thy doing it may be the means of his visiting them, as he visited thee, with his great salvation. O blessed fruit of brotherly love ; may it be the happy effect of thy light shining before men. May God be daily honoured by it, and the comfort, and if it please him, the salvation of his people be thereby promoted.

promoted. Yea, Lord, this is my prayer. My heart says, *Amen.*

If thou findest it very difficult to live in the constant practice of brotherly love, meditate, O my soul, upon the gospel motives for an increase of faith, and seek for the promised assistance to enable thee to love others as God hath loved thee. Above all, expect the effectual teaching of the Holy Ghost. He only can write this delightful law upon the heart—the fair impression of it is kept by his power—and the exercise of it in thy tempers and walk is the work of his grace. O pray then for a constant supply of the Spirit, that in all thy dealings with mankind it may appear thou hast been with Jesus. Set his most amiable life before their eyes. Give them reason to honour his beneficence, from thy copying it legibly after him. Let his love to thee be glorified from thy labour of love to them. Study to shew forth his praises, and go about doing good, as he did. And hereby convince the world, that Jesus Christ was the greatest moralist, and that his disciples come the nearest to the perfect pattern of their master; as a poet of our own observes—

*Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding love!*  
*Thou maker of new morals to mankind!*  
*The grand morality is love of thee.*

The love of Jesus teaches and enforces the love of the brethren. The Spirit of Jesus

writes it upon the heart, and makes it practicable in the life. And thus the two tables are joined together : and love to him that begat produces love to them that are begotten of him. When the happy believer is walking in this love to his Father and to his family, then he will live in the observance of the duties, which relate to himself: for he was taught them, when he returned in his heart to God. And every step he walks with God is in the practice of them.

The first temptation was an offer of independence—"Ye shall be as Gods"—man was drawn away by it, and fell from his high estate. Still this mother sin is fruitful in fallen man. In great mercy there is a pardon provided, and in the way of receiving the pardon, there is a remedy for it. The infinite wisdom of God so contrived the way of our recovery, that without Christ we can do nothing. His salvation undertaken and finished for us, his salvation applied to us, the blessings of his salvation enjoyed by us in time, and in eternity, are the free gifts of his free grace. He is the author. He is the finisher. He carries it on from first to last. All our sufficiency is of him. We cannot without him so much as think a good thought. Therefore his redeemed people are brought off from all trust in any other object, and are taught to place their whole dependence for salvation and for every thing that accompanies it, upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

To

To this end the holy Spirit, the great convincer of sin, had made them acquainted with themselves. He had awakened them to a right knowledge of their state, of which they had not been sensible before; and they found that they were fallen and apostate creatures. He shewed them sin in its exceeding sinfulness, and they tasted some of the bitter fruits of it: they felt in what a dreadful condition their departure from God had left them—so ignorant, that they could not by any human means attain to the least saving knowledge of God—so guilty, that let them do all they could, still the condemning sentence of the law stood out against them—so unholy, that soul and body were sold under sin, and ready to every unholy word and work—so utterly helpless, that it was impossible they should of themselves attain true happiness, or escape deserved misery. The holy Spirit taught them these lessons practically. His conviction carried demonstration with it. He not only made them feel their guilt and their danger; but he also opened a way for pardon and safety. He led them to Jesus, and in him they found every thing needful for their salvation—treasured up for them by the free covenant love of the Father—secured to them by the fulfilling of all covenant conditions in the life and death of the God-man—and received by the faith of the operation of the Holy Ghost: By whom they

they were made new creatures in Christ Jesus —members under him their head—united as intimately as the branches are to the vine —and living by, and in, and on him, every moment, and for every thing. Thus the glorifier of Jesus teaches all his members to depend upon the fulness of their head, and he abides with them in order to keep them in this dependence. He testifies to them of Jesus—“ He is your whole salvation, your “ all in all; you have not, you never will “ have, any thing to glory in, but in the “ Lord—whatever good you receive comes “ from his grace—whatever evil you escape, “ is from his blessing—and if ever you have “ eternal life, it will be the free gift of God “ in Christ Jesus. Your bodies also are de- “ pendent on him, as well as your souls: “ personal, family, national mercies are his “ royal favours, and bestowed out of his “ sovereign bounty.” Thus he teaches be- lievers. He humbles them, that they may exalt the Saviour. He makes them poor in spirit, that they may live upon his riches. He keeps them sensible of their own empti- ness, that they may be making constant use of the Saviour’s fulness, and living in an ab- solute dependence upon him for every thing. While they live thus by the faith of the Son of God, every high thought is brought into subjection to him. Pride is daily mortified. Self-complacency is abhorred. Self-admi- ration

ration is abominable. Humility is become their cloathing, and they cannot put it off: because every moment they are making use of it. Sins, wants, miseries, temptations, &c. are continually reminding them of their vileness, and of God's goodness. And this truth enforced by the holy Spirit makes them willing to learn of Jesus to be meek and lowly. They become teachable scholars, and sit very low at his feet, where they attain to true humility of heart. And this influences their whole behaviour. In a deep and abiding sense of their entire sinfulness and helplessness they loath themselves before God, and walk humbly before men. They feel they are of themselves nothing but sin, and if left to themselves can be nothing but misery, therefore they put their whole trust and confidence in a covenant God, and his free grace has from them all its glory.

What is thy knowledge, O my soul, and what is thine experience of this christian poverty of spirit? Art thou acquainted with it in the ground of thine heart, and is it in thy daily practice? Examine thyself, and with diligence: for it is a most blessed grace, advanced to high honour in the court of Jesus. To it he has made many exceeding great and precious promises. O pray to him for this royal gift. Wait on thy divine prophet, and hear his lessons. He teaches, as man cannot.

cannot. He recommends: He gives, the grace of humility. He makes his scholars truly humble in heart. Observe his abasing doctrine, and may all within thee bow to the power of it.

Observe, how he humbles the sinner: He convinces him of his sinful state, of the corruption of his whole nature, and of the depravity of every faculty of soul and body. The sinner is made to feel it, and to live under the sense of it. And in order to fasten the conviction, clearer discoveries are daily made of this corruption: for it is a mystery of iniquity. There is no tracing to the bottom its deep laid devices, and never ceasing workings. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? There is not a man upon earth, who knows all that may be known of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of his own sinfulness. When the Lord who searcheth the heart has laid open some of its infinite evil; he continues to discover more. Every day brings to light strange workings of corruption. The convinced sinner has deeper views of his helplessness; and of his unworthiness. And after many vain legal trials, he at last finds it impossible for him to do any thing, for which God should pardon him and save him. Thus he is laid low with his mouth in the dust—Behold, I am vile, filthy and abominable altogether,

gether, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

These are the humbling lessons, which the holy Spirit teaches. He convinces the sinner, that there is neither help nor hope in himself, and so leaves him nothing to trust in, but the salvation provided in Jesus by covenant love, and given freely by grace. And the manner of receiving this salvation is such as cuts off all occasion of boasting: For faith is the only means appointed of God,—and faith is his gift—not bestowed upon the worthy but upon the ungodly—not for any merit in them, or for any terms or conditions, which they have performed or ever will perform, but by an act of absolute sovereignty to the praise of the glory of his own grace. He will have mercy, because he will have mercy. O humbling consideration! How low does it bring the sinner! How must his proud heart be abased, while he feels himself a debtor for every thing good to the mere will and pleasure of God. And so long as he enjoys those good things, he is kept poor in spirit: Because he has none of them in himself. They are laid up in the fulness of Jesus, are to be had from thence only by faith, and are received as the sense of his wants leads the believer to make use of them. Living by faith is the death of self importance. Then the loftiness of man is bowed down,

down, the haughtiness of man is made low, and the Lord alone is exalted.

Observe, O my soul, what an honour God has put upon this grace. "Before honour is humility." Whom God honours he humbles first. He giveth grace to the humble : Because the humble give him all his glory. The highest throne which he has upon earth is in the humblest heart. To it he vouchsafes his constant presence, and makes the greatest communications of his love : " For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabith eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." O what an honour is here promised to the humble ! The greatest they can have on this side of heaven. God will dwell with them ; and what a blessing ! and his temple shall be in the humble heart. The high and holy one passes by what is in highest esteem among men. He stains the pride of human greatness and goodness. He does not vouchsafe to set up his throne with the princes, nor to give his honour to the learned, of the world. But he puts honour upon the contrite and humble. He condescends to visit them, yea he delights to dwell with them and in them—the highest above all heavens in the lowest hearts. There he communicates his choicest

choicest love and richest favours. O my God, bestow upon me this grace, which in thy sight is so precious. Humble me, that I may be revived with thy presence, and refreshed daily with thy love. Give me more humility, and fit me for nearer fellowship with thee. Bring down every high thought, and let me find it true, that God resisteth the proud, but giveth more grace unto the humble.

Thus the true poverty of spirit is needful, not only to bring the sinner to Christ, but also to preserve the believer in communion with him : For so long as he walks by faith, every thing will tend to promote this communion. In the daily sense of his wants, he will go to his bountiful Saviour for a supply. In the feeling of his misery, he will depend on his loving Saviour for relief : whereby he will be led to more intercourse with him. What he finds wrong in himself will bring him to live more by faith, and as faith increases, so will his delight in God. He will grow more sensible of his weakness, and that will make him stronger in the Lord. He will know more of his own heart, which will humble him and keep him dependent on the grace of Jesus. He will see reason not to lean to his own understanding, but ever to pray, Lord, guide me by thy good Spirit. Viewing spots and blemishes in his best doings, his triumph will be, “ I will make

“ mention

“ mention of thy righteousness, Lord Jesus, “ even of thine ONLY.” Thus every thing will humble him, and lead him on to live more by faith ; by which means he will get faster hold of Jesus, live in nearer fellowship, and be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace—two graces at once—the blessing needed—and thankfulness for it. Hereby a sweet intercourse will be kept open. To the humble God delights to give grace, and they delight to return him his glory. The more he gives, the more glory would they gladly return. And he does give more, and he receives it back again in thanks and praise. Blessed grace ! by which this holy fellowship is maintained. Happy humility ! by which the heart being emptied of self is capable of receiving the fulness which is of God. Then is the promise fulfilled—“ Blessed are the “ poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of “ heaven”—it is theirs now—not only in title, but also in profession ; for the kingdom of God is within them. And they are partakers at present of its blessings and glories, as truly, though not so perfectly, as they will be in heaven. Meditate, O my soul, upon this divine grace. Thou seest the necessity of it, O pray earnestly for it, and for more of it. The great idol SELF must be dethroned, where God reigns. Thou canst not walk with him, unless thou art humble in heart. And if thou hast been walking with him, thou wilt stop,

stop, whenever thou beginnest to look at self with admiration. O beg of the Lord then to give thee the true gospel poverty of spirit. It is to be in constant practice and used for every thing: for thou seest how it keeps up fellowship with God, who makes the greatest communications of himself to the humblest. And the reason is because they return him all his glory. If therefore thou wouldest have much grace, pray for much humility. O my God, whatever thou givest, give humility with it, that I may not seek self in it, but thine honour, nor lay it out upon myself, but to thy glory. Meek and lowly Jesus, make me like thyself: keep me learning of thee, till I am perfectly like thee. I would come always poor to thee to receive of thy riches, and to receive with them an humble heart to praise thee for them. O let thy glory be mine end and aim. Let me and mine be thine—I humbled—thou exalted. Let thy graces and gifts bring thee in a constant revenue of praise. And may thine increasing goodness be joined with a constant increase of humility, that my heart and all within me may bless and praise thy holy name to day, and for ever. *Amen.* And

Let this appear in my whole behaviour to others. This is another blessed fruit of humility. It has an influence over the believer's intercourse with mankind, and renders his manners loving and amiable. Pride was not made

made for man, and yet it is in all men, and is the chief parent of human woe. It sets people above their place, and makes them think, that they could support the greatest fortunes, and are able to manage the most difficult affairs. Others, as proud as they, deny them their fancied superiority. Hence come wars and fightings, public and private. The sweet grace of humility is sent from heaven to relieve those distresses: for into whatever bosom it enters, it renders men kind to one another, tender hearted, ready to every good word and work. Thus runs the divine exhortation: "Be ye kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love in honour preferring one another." This is heart-humility, which the holy spirit requires, and which he bestows. He brings his disciples into humble subjection to God, and then to one another: which has the most happy effects upon public, social and private happiness. How would these flourish, if all men were of a meek and quiet spirit? But there is none of this among the unconverted, and alas! how little is there among believers? How often are they in the proud spirit of the world? acting contrary to the lowly spirit of Jesus. And yet it is not for want of precept, nor for want of promised help: but it is because they are not walking by faith, as becometh the gospel, nor out of love to God's glory studying to recommend humility.

humility by their practice. Observe, O my soul, the remedy provided of God for the subduing of all selfish tempers, and pray that it may be effectual in thy life and conversation. ' Do you think that the scripture " faith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in " us lusteth to envy: But God giveth more " grace, wherefore he saith, God resisteth the " proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.' This scripture cannot speak in vain: for fallen man is certainly such as he is here described. The spirit that dwelleth in him, in his own nature, lusteth to envy—a passion made up of pride and discontent—offended with God—and displeased with the blessings, which he bestows upon men. It is an enemy to the love both of God and man, and transgresses the law of both tables. Pride brought it into heaven, and the fallen angels brought it into this world. Ever since it entered by sin, natural corruption breaks out very much in envy. But God giveth more grace, to conquer this passion, than sinful nature has to put it forth. He not only gives grace to pardon it, but also more grace to subdue it: so that envy loses its dominion in the reign of grace. We cannot subdue, any more than we can pardon, envy, pride, and such passions, but grace is almighty. Want ever so much, use ever so much, God has still more for you. And he gives more, when the creature is humbled enough to take it out of the hands

hands of his mercy. Thus he overcomes envy: "For he resisteth the proud," he is at open war with them, and they with him. Pride lifts up the creature against the Creator; and puts it upon seeking happiness out of God: this is resisting his sovereignty, attacking his providence, and opposing his law. He is concerned to pull such rebels down, and he says, their pride goeth before destruction: "But he giveth grace unto the humble"—he gives them grace to humble them, and being emptied he delights to fill them: for then they are disposed to receive his grace, and to value it. Whatever God gives, the humble give it back again to him. They have the blessing, he has the praise: which is the just tribute due to him for his gifts. And he gives more grace, where he can get more glory. Thus he subdues self-conceit with its various proud workings. And as grace reigns over them, humility prevails; which has a friendly aspect towards mankind, keeps brotherly love in the heart, and tends mightily to the practice of every social virtue. Humility suffereth long and is kind; humility envieth not; humility vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil.

Consider, O my soul, those motives to an holy walk. Put them all together. Weigh them carefully, again and again. Do it faithfully,

faithfully, as in the presence of God. And then try, whether thou art walking in the way of duty with a free spirit. Dost thou proceed upon evangelical or upon legal principles? Dost thou serve God for wages, or for love? Examine thy heart. God looks chiefly at it. How is it in duty? Is thine obedience to justify thee in the least, or does it spring from a sense of thy being justified freely and fully? Art thou going to establish thine own righteousness, or dost thou submit to the righteousness of God? Art thou working from life, or for life? I require thee to examine diligently by the light of the word, and by the teaching of the holy Spirit, what thy motives are: For there is no acceptable obedience, but what is done in faith: Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. If thou art acting aright, the love of Christ is constraining thee to obedience. Thou art living under the influence of free grace. Thy conscience is at peace with God. Thou hast sweet liberty to serve him without fear. Thy heart delights in his service, and love makes his ways the joy of thy soul. Thou knowest what Jacob felt, when he served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her. A gospel-spirit does the same to God—love makes long service short—and hard service easy. Nothing is pain, which love does. And this is gospel obedience. It is faith working by love, which

which refines duty into a grace ; the commandments are exalted into privileges ; the ordinances become happy means of fellowship with God. The believer meets God in them, and by the free converse he exercises and improves his love. He draws near to God, and God draws near to him in prayer, in praise, in hearing the word, at the Lord's supper, and in all sabbath duties. In these ways God manifests his gracious presence, and the believer rejoices in it. God communicates his graces, and the believer receives them with thankfulness. O my soul, pray before duty for much of this communion with God in it. Seek it as the one great end of all duty. And if thou findest it, bless and praise the goodness of thy God. But still seek to be more spiritual and evangelical, that the fruits of thy fellowship with God may appear in thy practice of the duties of the second table. Love to God will manifest itself by love to men : For the holy Spirit teaches all his disciples to love one another, and he teaches effectually. He not only makes them understand, what brotherly love is, but he also gives it. They become partakers of the grace, and are enabled to practise it. Thus he recommends and enforces his lessons. He renders his scholars kind to one another, and tender hearted. He puts forth his mighty power, and subdues

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the vile selfish tempers of the old man, and brings into use the benevolent tempers of the new man. While he carries on the gracious work his disciples grow more acquainted with themselves, and learn heart humility. He makes them feel their fallen state, their sinfulness and their danger ; in the sense of their guilt and of their distance from God they are willing to receive Christ for their whole salvation, and then to enjoy in him, all the blessings of the Father's love in earth and heaven.

If thou findest it difficult, O my soul, to walk according to this rule : If to obey from love to God—to love men for God's sake—and in the sense of thy own vileness to be humbled to the dust—if these be hard lessons ; consider what makes them so. Where is the difficulty ? Is it not in thyself ? And is it not chiefly in thy not using and not bringing into practice the principles advanced in the former chapters ? Duty must be hard, if the spring of obedience be not in motion ; but if this act freely, then all will go on well.

Thy whole conduct through life depends upon the nature of the salvation, of which thou art a partaker by grace. Consider it attentively. The growing knowledge of it will engage thine affections to a willing obedience. Is it not a complete salvation—an absolutely perfect work—yea the greatest work of God ? Because all the rest come from it, and lead to it.

Is it not the infinitely wise contrivance of the eternal Three, for which everlasting glory is to be given to every divine attribute? When every other work of God shall cease, for this all heaven will to eternity be ascribing honour and blessing and praise to Father, Son, and Spirit. Attend, O my soul, to the scripture account of this salvation. Review the glory of it. Read again and again the revealed descriptions of it, till thy heart be satisfied, that this salvation is as perfect and complete, as the Lord God almighty could make it. This is its character. Hast thou studied it well, and art thou well grounded and established in the belief of it? Mind: this is the foundation. If this totter, so will all the superstructure. O pray then, and be earnest in prayer that God would enlarge thy views of the infinitely glorious and everlasting perfect salvation, which is in Christ Jesus.

As thou growest more acquainted with it, thou wilt see less reason to be discouraged at the experience of what thou art in thyself. It is a salvation for sinners—such as thou art—and no way differing from thee. Only when they are called to the knowledge of the truth, they are acquainted with their fallen slate, are made sensible of their helplessness and of their misery, but are made willing to venture their souls at God's command upon the Lord Jesus, trusting to the peace which he made by the

the blood of the cross. And art not thou in the happy number of these redeemed sinners? Dost not thou believe the record, which God hath given of his Son, and look upon it as thy lawful warrant—to make use of what is laid up in the fulness of Jesus—thine to take freely—thine to use fully—the more the better—thine for receiving, without any condition or any qualification? He loves to give, and without money or money's worth. He thinks himself honoured by the pensioners of his grace, who bring nothing to recommend themselves, but their sins and miseries, and yet trust in his promised relief. Herein he glories. When they come to him believing, he bestows his royal gifts upon every one of them: And so far as they believe, he withholds nothing that is needful for their holy walk in the way of duty.

These are the principles, which thou art to bring into practice. Carry them, O my soul, into every act of obedience. Go to prayer and every duty with this faith, that thou art in Christ, and in him a partaker of his finished salvation. Then the Father's love to thee will be manifest, and thou wilt have sweet fellowship with him in all thine approaches to the throne—Whatever thou undertakest, forget not this leading truth. If thou lose sight of it, thou wilt get into darkness: If thou art not influenced by it, thou wilt be brought into bondage. Upon

this absolutely perfect salvation thou art to live by faith upon earth, and thou wilt have nothing else to live upon by sense in heaven. Trusting to the complete work of Jesus thou art to walk with thy God in time, as thou wilt follow the lamb in eternity, receiving all out of his fulness. O view him in this light, and it will have the happiest effects upon thy daily walk. While thou art receiving from him grace for grace, thou wilt live with him in sweet friendship, duty will be the way and means of enjoying the love of thy divine friend, and the more thou art in his company the more delightful will be the way of his commandments. These are thy privileges. Read the promises concerning them. Call to mind what thy Father in Jesus has engaged to give his children. Has he not provided grace sufficient for them? And is it not for his honour, as well as thy profit, that he should give both the will and power to walk humbly with him? O, plead his promises. Bind him with his faithfulness. Be unfortunate with him, and pray without ceasing. Let this be thy daily plea.

O my God, order my walk according to thy holy word. It is thy mind and will, that I should love thee with all my heart, and soul, and mind and strength, and my neighbour as myself: but I am not sufficient for these things. There is no pure love in my soul by nature. Every affection in me is turned

turned from the Creator to the creature. I am in bondage, a slave to lust, sold under sin. I cannot love thee, infinitely lovely as thou art, until thou break my bonds asunder, and set my soul at liberty. But being now redeemed from guilt and fear, I am become thy freeman; and for the unspeakable redemption that is in Jesus, thou wouldest have me to serve thee. Blessed be thy holy name for requiring mine obedience upon this sweet motive—“I am the Lord your God, “who brought you out of the land of Egypt “and out of the house of bondage.” On this account obey me: because I am the Lord your God, and I stand related to you, as your redeemer from slavery. O my gracious God and Father, I desire upon this motive to keep thy commandments. I believe thou art my God in Jesus, and through him I have redemption from bondage to my sins and enemies. With this free spirit would I always go to duty: but I cannot walk in this liberty, any more than I could at first attain it, without thy grace. O my God, let the Spirit of adoption abide with me, that he may draw men nearer to thee in thy ways and ordinances, and I may in them enjoy more of thy presence, and of the light of thy countenance. Thee I seek in them. Thou art the end of all ways and means: and if they lead me not to thee, I go empty away. Gracious God, make thy commandments the joy of my heart,

and let them be the means of keeping up holy intercourse and happy fellowship with thee. This my heart pants after. Duty without this is nothing worth. I wait in thine appointed ways for the visits of thy grace, hoping to grow in knowledge and faith, in hope and love. The communion, which I have enjoyed, has increased my longing. My soul is athirst for God, praying to be more with thee, and more like thee. And is not this what thou requirest, and what thou hast promised to do for me? Grant me then, my gracious God, the prayer of my heart. In all my duties let me enjoy thy presence, and communications of thy love. Let me do them in faith, and with a single eye to thy glory. Let me be thus spiritual and heavenly minded in them, that I may grow up into Christ Jesus in all things.

And I desire, holy Father, to grow in love to thee, that I may manifest the fruits of it by my love to mankind. Pardon every selfish temper, which is opposite to the love of the brethren: And teach me to love them, as thou hast loved me. Whatever thou hast promised, fulfil in me. Make me, O thou Spirit of love, like the loving Jesus. Give me his benevolent tempers, and help me to imitate his beneficent actions. Let his love to me be the pattern of my love to them. Since thou hast in much mercy made me a child of light, O let me shine before men,

men, that they may see and feel my good works, and may glorify thee for them. And the more thou doest in me, and by me, humble me still more, O my God. Keep me meek and lowly, always ready to give the glory of all my mercies to the Three in Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, to whom be equal honour and praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*The End of the First Volume.*

